



# THE DARALON CAMPAIGN & OTHER RESOURCES

*by Steve Kenson*

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# THE DARALON CAMPAIGN

&

## OTHER RESOURCES

*A Web Book derived from the works of*

**Steve Kenson**

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## **CREDITS**

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# *THE DARALON CAMPAIGN*

## *& OTHER RESOURCES*

### INTRODUCTION

Steve Kenson is an author whose work continues to live on in the third edition of Earthdawn. His major works for first edition Earthdawn include Earthdawn Survival Guide and Crystal Raiders of Barsaive. As a contributing author of Legends of Earthdawn, Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets, Prelude to War, Arcane Mysteries of Barsaive, Secret Societies of Barsaive, Dragons and Barsaive at War, he has had a major impact on the game world.

All of the the material in this archive was made available on his website for free for many years, now that online presence is gone. This archive has bee created with his permission.





# KAER DARALON

According to the records of the Kaer kept in the Hall of Time, Daralon was a prosperous town nestled in a mountain valley in the Theran province of Barsaive. It subsisted mostly on farming the valley area and selling some of the famed Daralon ironwork and pottery worked from clay taken from the riverbanks. The inhabitants of the town paid their tithes to the Theran Overgovonor and their dues for the Rites of Protection and Passage that have allowed them to survive the Scourge.

Kaer Daralon was built over the course of three generations in the mountain caves above the valley. Much of the work was done by the master Elf Elementalist and builder Dianuus. The natural caverns were expanded and strengthened by elemental magic, all laid out in accordance with the Theran plan. When the early signs of the Scourge came to the Daralon valley, the people entered the kaer and the wards were sealed to wait out the Long Night.

That was 498 years ago. It is now the fifteen hundred and sixth year since the founding of the Kingdom of Throal. More than fifteen generations have lived and died in the confines of the kaer, waiting and watching the elemental clock designed by Eternal Thera to tell when the time of the Scourge would be over. Fifty years ago, the sphere of True Earth stopped its descent towards the bowl of True Water.

This unexpected development has resulted in considerable debate and discussion among the leaders of the kaer, but thus far they have erred on the side of caution. The Therans predicted that the Scourge would last as long as another century, but there is a growing belief in the kaer that something terrible has happened and that the Scourge will never end. Some of the people have begun to despair that the end will never come and there is an edge of madness to life in Kaer Daralon.

The people of the kaer remain hidden deep in the earth, watching, waiting and hoping for some sign that the Long Night has ended.

## The History of the Kaer Daralon

Kaer Daralon was created by the people of the town of Daralon and the inhabitants of its surrounding farms and villages. The kaer was designed to hold all of the inhabitants of the mountain valley where the town stood. This included a village of T'skrang from the nearby river as well as several Troll clans from the high mountains. Members of six different races dwell in the kaer, so there was some friction at first. Minor incidents of violence and conflict arose and were harshly dealt with by the kaer's ruling council.

In the final days before the closing of the kaer, a party of adventurers arrived in Daralon. They claimed to be fleeing from horrors they had encountered in the foothills of the Caucavic Mountains. The elders of Daralon took this as a sign of the time to seal the kaer. The party of adepts took shelter there as well.

One of the adepts who settled in the kaer was the Ork Swordmaster Kilas Tarn. Ill at ease with a life of confinement, Tarn began a school to pass on his discipline to others. He married a woman of Daralon and his line carried on the tradition for generations.

Some two hundred years ago, there was an outbreak of plague in the kaer that nearly doomed all of the inhabitants. Dianuus the Master-Builder, himself stricken with the plague, use his magic to cause a rockslide that buried the access tunnel to the most plague-ridden portion of the kaer. This halted spread of the plague and saved the rest of the kaer.

Dianuus and some of the other adepts of the kaer were lost in the tragedy, along with their accumulated wisdom. Some people claim-though not too loudly-that faint noises



can sometimes be heard from behind the rockfall that closed off the plague tunnels and that there are ghosts or worse that still haunt those halls.

The ravages of the plague and the pressures of life within the kaer began to diminish the population of the community. So the loss of a section of the kaer did not prove overly taxing.

About fifty years ago the Council of Twelve appointed a small group of adepts to exit the kaer and explore outside. Among them was Grella Tarn, swordswoman and descendant of Kilas Tarn, wielder of his legendary sword Truefang. The party departed through the Guardian Gate and it was sealed behind them. They never returned. Since then, the Council and their successors has been reluctant to allow any more such expeditions.

### **Life in the Kaer**

Life in Kaer Daralon is very routine and has been for as long as any can recall. Food is carefully rationed out morning, noon and night, usually meals of magically grown vegetables and similar staples with the occasional special celebration calling for meat or baked goods made from the kaer's carefully protects supply of animals and grains. During the day the kaer's adults work the lattice farms that provide food, tend to the small herds of sheep or cave lizards in their pens or provide repairs or craft work for the kaer. In the evening troubadours and storytellers read from the Book of Tomorrow and tell tales of the outside world while illusionists entertain and enlighten with their images of the world of the ancestors before the Scourge.

Kaer Daralon is ruled by the Council of Twelve, the wisest and most capable chosen from among the people. The Council represents the Twelve Passions that are venerated in the kaer. Although the Council members are not always Questors, many of them are, and they are chosen to represent their Passion's purview on the Council. The Council makes laws, metes out justice and administers the kaer. Slavery is the typical punishment for any crime that does not

merit death. Death sentences have become increasingly rare.

The other major factions of the kaer include the Swords of Daralon (usually simply known as the Swords) and the Adept's Lodge. The Swords are a warrior sect that serves as the guardians, police and military. They generally keep the peace in the kaer and are the only people allowed to carry weapons with them routinely.

The Adept's Lodge is made up of the kaer's surviving adept traditions, who pass on their teachings to suitable students in anticipations of the end of the Long Night. Some Disciplines have died out or were never really represented among those in the kaer. Other disciplines, like the Scout and Beastmaster, have survived in little more than a ceremonial role, since the environments intended for them are limited in the kaer. There is some resentment by kaer residents against practioners of disciplines that are looked upon as "useless" since they don't contribute to the survival of the community.

### **The Structure of The Kaer**

Kaer Daralon is laid out like most kaers built under the Theran plan. There is a large central cavern, lit by a massive light quartz embedded in the roof. This cavern contains the central buildings of the kaer: the Hall of Time, the Adept's Lodge, Council Chambers, the Temple of the Passions and the Garrison of the Swords as well as other administrative buildings. The central chambers also houses Crafter's Row, a long row of tents and open kiosks where the people trade their humble arts and crafts. (As much to prove they are free of taint as for any love of art.)

The outer edges of the great cavern and several other caves are taken up by the lattice farms, high frameworks where the produce that feeds the kaer is grown, aided by elemental magic and the blessings of the Passions.

In the center of the cavern is a fantastic statue of the passion Garlen, sculpted from rosy living crystal by Dianuus the Builder. Radiating out from the central plaza are six



narrow roads. Five are named for the True Elements and lead to the living quarters for the people. Each road leaves the plaza under a sculpted arch made from the appropriate true element and the "central square" of each living space holds a fantastic sculpture of that element made by the master-builder himself. The Fire Caves were sealed during the plague by Dianuus and have been lost for some two hundred years, but the other areas have been more than enough for the kaer's population. The Fire Arch went out the same day is now little more than a monument of blackened coal.

The sixth road leads to a pair of orichalcum gates between two statues of fierce warriors known as the Guardian Gate. This gate leads into a maze of traps and deadfalls to the surface and the sealed entrance of the kaer.

Beneath the central cavern are deeper tunnels and caves. These were intended for population growth in the kaer, but the population has been shrinking so these areas are abandoned and left alone. Few go there save for members of the Swords or the Adept's Lodge on some strange errand or another. Kaer-lore has it that these dark tunnels sometimes serve as meeting places for strange gatherings or other doings best hidden from the rest of the people.

### **The People of Daralon**

Most of the population of kaer Daralon is Dwarf and Human. There are some Elves and Orks as well. Trolls and T'Skrang are the most rare and have been the worst hit by the kaer's declining population, the T'Skrang especially so. There are only thirty-six T'Skrang remaining in the kaer—all that is left of an extended clan—and they fear that they may well die out in another few generations.

There were some Windlings in Kaer Daralon, but they died two centuries ago during the plague, only the oldest Elves still remember them.

Obsidimen are nothing more than a legend to the inhabitants of the kaer. They are mentioned in the Book of Tomorrow, but none have dwelled in Daralon, so no one in

the kaer has ever seen one.

Current population of Kaer Daralon is about 3,000 Name-givers. The kaer was constructed for nearly twice that number, but the population has slowly declined over the centuries and some of the lower caverns and tunnels of the kaer have been abandoned, along with the loss of the Fire Caves. Strange subterranean creatures have sometimes been spotted in the lower tunnels and they are normally considered off-limits to the kaer's inhabitants. There is some concern over the declining population, and some doomsayers claim that the kaer will die out before the Scourge is over.

### **Individuals of Note**

**Doria kel'Ar**, human female, Questor of Garlen, Councilor and former High Sword of Daralon. Councilor Doria was once acknowledged as the most skilled warrior in Daralon with the office of High Sword, leader of the Swords of Daralon. That was many years ago and she has since retired from the ways of combat: at least with a blade. She has taken up the ways of Garlen and is still known as a tenacious "she-bear" by her opponents on the Council of Twelve. She is wise, comforting, strong-willed and well loved by the people of the kaer.

**Pelgar**, dwarf male, Archmage and Councilor. The archmage Pelgar is an elderly dwarf who came to his office nearly twenty years ago. He is a wizard of no small skill and oversees the activities of Daralon's magicians, mostly to the maintenance of the kaer and the investigation of the conditions outside though so far with little success. A crotchety curmudgeon of a dwarf, he is the terror of magical apprentices—and no few adults—in the kaer.

**Mabon Rus**, human male, Questor of Erendis, Councilor. Councilor Mabon is a follower of Erendis, the Passion of Order and Governance, which makes him well suited for his duties on the council of Twelve. His wisdom in matters of administration is heeded by his peers and he is well known for keeping life in the kaer running smoothly. Mabon is fair but firm, with a strong reputation as a disciplinarian among the



children of the kaer.

**Meer'resh t'Lassor**, female t'skrang, Councilor. Councilor Meer'resh is the female head of the surviving T'skrang clan in Kaer Daralon. She is fairly young for her role, the old matriarch of the clan having passed only two years ago. She is considered level-headed compared to some of her brethren, who clamor increasingly for action from the Council. Her brother, Sethek, has also done little to aid her cause.

**Netzach Kol**, ork male, Master of Memory, Keeper of the Book of Tomorrow and Scholar. Netzach is nearing the age of fifty, ancient for an Ork. He credits his long life to this love of knowledge and claims that he won't die until he knows all there is to know. He lovingly tends to the kaer's precious stores of books, scrolls and other heirlooms in the Hall of Time. He knows all of the lore and history of Daralon and can often be found telling stories to children in the Plaza in the evenings.

**Onara Stonebones**, troll female, Warrior, High Sword. Captain Stonebones is the High Sword, commander of the Swords of Daralon warrior order and a skilled fighter herself. The troll warrior stands a head-and-a-half taller than even the tallest human males of the kaer and wields her massive stone broadsword like it was a toy. Her booming laugh and good cheer make her a welcome companion and a popular leader. Onara claims that she does not involve

herself in politics, concerning herself only with keeping the peace.

**Sethek t'Lassor**, male t'skrang, Nethermancer. The mysterious Sethek is an albino T'skrang with white scaly skin and reddish eyes. Considered an omen by his clan mother at his birth of the dying of the T'skrang within the kaer, Sethek has always had a morbid fascination with death. This, naturally, led him to become a nethermancer, which has caused the people to shun him all the more. This seems to be to the t'skrang's liking and he contents himself with his solitary magical research, working with the kaer's other magicians when needed but keeping mostly to himself.

**Vonna Firehair**, female elf, Questor of Astendar, Councilor. Councilor Vonna is in many ways the soul of social life in Kaer Daralon. As the most devoted follower of Astendar in the kaer, she is involved in all matters of art and beauty in an effort to bring cheer into the lives of the people. Some say that she is something of a busybody but most are enchanted by her wit and charm. Firehair is well known for the namesake hair of reddish-gold locks. She has been pursued by many suitors in the kaer and has taken many lovers, but has not chosen a mate. She claims to not want to be tied down at this early stage in her life, since she is not yet a century old, making her fairly young for an elf.



## THE HAND OF DARALON

The Hand of Daralon is the Name of the group of adepts from my Earthdawn campaign. Several of the things I've written for Earthdawn (particularly items from Arcane Mysteries of Barsaive) started as ideas from my campaign.

### Members of the Hand

#### Ak'le'ar

Ak'le'ar is a human elemental from Kaer Daralon. Like most magicians, he is intellectual and introspective. He's fairly soft-spoken and often tries to be the voice of reason within the group (given so many other members with fairly short tempers). Ak'le'ar

and Jarren are particularly good friends

since Ak'le'ar began to teach Jarren how to read and write. The two of them have a friendly betting rivalry.

#### Jardaal Tarn

Jardaal is an ork swordmaster from a long line of swordmasters. He wields his family's



sword, Named Truefang. Jardaal (like many orks) has not had an easy life: he was captured and tortured by the Hand's old enemy Sethek and lost his right hand to one of Sethek's schemes. Jardaal has since replaced his hand with a magical silver replacement and keeps his severed original hand as one of his pattern items.

### **Jarren Swiftwind**

Jarren is a troll archer, and the only member of the Hand not originally from Kaer Daralon. Jarren hails from a troll village in the Delaris Mountains not far from the kaer's location. Jarren is fun-loving and considerably more philosophical in bent than most trolls (making him a good match for Ak'le'ar). He lost an eye in a battle with the horror Thanor and replaced it with a crystalline targeting eye.

### **Kaeron Blackfang**

Kaeron is a troll warrior descended from a group of trolls exiled from the Twilight Peaks who settled in the Delaris Mountains and took shelter in Kaer Daralon during the Scourge. Since leaving the kaer, Kaeron has started to explore his heritage. He has died several times in battle, each time saved by magic like a death cheat charm or a last chance salve. His fascination with death led Kaeron to become a nethermancer as well as a warrior.

### **Thain Redstone**

Thain is a dwarf scout and probably the most kind-hearted and noble of the Hand. He is a wanderer and explorer at heart and embraced the call of the open road. He is also somewhat troubled, since the adepts discovered that the magical weapons Thain discovered in the ancient lair of a dead dragon may in fact be Horror-tainted.



## **THE DARALON CAMPAIGN**

What follows is a quick summery of the Daralon Campaign.

### **Background**

The campaign begins inside a kaer that still sealed against the Horrors and the Scourge, Named Daralon after the town that the kaer-dwellers' ancestors used to inhabit in a fertile valley in the depths of the treacherous Caucavic Mountain in the northeastern corner of Barsaive.

Like in kaers all over Barsaive, the elemental "clock" used by the people of Kaer Daralon stopped its steady descent. This caused the people of the kaer some concern, since they now had now no means of determining if the Scourge had truly ended. Fifty years before the start of the campaign, the kaer's ruling council chooses to send a party of adepts outside the kaer to investigate, including on player-character's great-grandmother. The party never returns and the kaer-dwellers assume that the Scourge continues.

### **The Initiation**

The campaign begins as a group of four young apprentices prepare to undergo their initiation as adepts of Kaer Daralon. They are Thain Redstone, a dwarf Scout; Jardaal Tarn, an ork Swordmaster who is the great-grandson of the woman who led the ill-fated expedition 50 years previously; Kaeron Blackfang, troll Warrior; and Aklear, a human Elementalist.

The adepts have held a long vigil of preparation for their initiation ritual and they each drink a potion known as "the Blood of the Adepts" prepared by the kaer's chief wizard and lore-master. Then the adepts went into the long abandoned maze of tunnels beneath the kaer, where they were to seek their ritual pledge coins that were concealed there.



In the tunnels, the adepts fought a group of animated skeletons and discovered what seemed to be a passage to the outside world. They found themselves in Daralon as it must have looked before the Scourge and discovered that it is as if they have traveled into the past, not long before the sealing of the kaer. They encountered the legendary Dianuus, the elf elemental who built Kaer Daralon and died in saving it from a terrible plague centuries ago. They also encounter a nightmare army of animated dead that march on the small town at the front of an approaching storm. The adepts retreat with the townspeople into the kaer and it is sealed by Dianuus.

Suddenly, the adepts find themselves in Kaer Daralon years later, during the time of the Fire Plague that nearly wiped out the kaer. A much-older Dianuus fights the plague and a rouge fire elemental that appears in the kaer, aided by the player characters. The adepts witness Dianuus' sealing of the Fire Caves from the rest of the kaer and his self-sacrifice to protect the other kaer inhabitants.

The adepts discover that their experiences are the result of hallucinations and illusions caused by the potion and the magic of their initiation. They find the coins they set out to find and return to the central chamber of the kaer. But when they tell their story to the kaer's wizard, they discover that the skeletons they fought and saw in their visions were not supposed to be part of the ritual experience. They also found real bones in the tunnels where they fought the skeletons, suggesting that something might be terribly wrong in the kaer.

### **The Dead Walk**

Forbidden to speak of their experience for fear of alarming the other kaerfolk, the adepts are initiated and swear to defend Daralon and its people. They begin investigating the strange skeletons and discover that a t'skrang nethermancer from Daralon Named Sethek T'lassor has found a way into the sealed Fire Caves and has been animating the hundred or more skeletons of

the plague victims there. The adepts also discover a colony of Pale Ones living in undiscovered tunnels deep beneath the kaer.

Sethek, himself an albino t'skrang, has made the Pale Ones his allies and plans to attack the kaer and take over. The player characters managed to convince the Pale Ones that Sethek is not trustworthy, but they are too late to stop the nethermancer's attack on the kaer. With the most powerful of Daralon's defenders struck down by a renewed plague caused by Sethek, the kaer's elders choose to reveal an important secret to the player characters: Dianuus the Elementalist prepared secret defenses for Daralon in the event of a Horror gaining access to the kaer. Deep in a hidden grotto lies the Heart of Daralon, a magical crystal enchanted by Dianuus to protect the kaerfolk. The adepts must find it if the kaer is to survive.

The characters descend into the darkest depths of the catacombs, pursued by Sethek's skeleton minions. They find the chamber of the Heart, guarded by an undead water serpent. They managed to get the Heart and race to return to the upper chambers of the kaer, where Sethek's assault has already begun.

Fighting past the skeleton minions, the heroes try to reach the crystal statue of the Passion Garlen that stands in the center of the kaer's main chamber. Sethek and his undead fight to stop them and Jardaal ends up cutting off the Nethermancer's right hand to prevent him from casting a spell that would stop Thain from reaching the statue. The Heart of Daralon is magically raised up in front of the statue and a pure, magical light scours the kaer clear of the undead, which crumble to dust. Sethek vanishes in the blinding light and the crystalline Heart becomes a part of Garlen's crystal statue.

### **Journey Outside**

After saving their kaer from Sethek's machinations, our heroes are chosen by the Council of Twelve that governs Kaer Daralon to be the first exploratory party to leave the kaer in fifty years. They bid farewell to friends and family and are escorted to the



Guardian Gates at the entrance of the great central chamber of the kaer, where they exit the kaer out into the multilayered Stairway that forms the kaer's line of defense.

In the Stair, the characters discover the bodies of two of the original members of the party that set out fifty years ago, killed by the kaer's defensive traps. It appears as if those killed were running back into the kaer when they stumbled into the traps.

The heroes reach the great orichalcum-laced doors of the kaer and speak the incantation to open them. The long-sealed doors creak open to allow in the first breath of the outside world in many years. In the night outside of the kaer, the adepts discover a ring of standing stones, carved with runes, surrounding the kaer entrance. The ring of stones contains a spectral dancer, the tortured spirit of one of the members of the exploratory party fifty years ago. She attacks the adepts in a fury and they fight for their lives. They escape by breaking the barrier of stones, allowing the spirit to flee. Of Jardaal's great-grandmother Grella Tarn there is no trace. She is the only member of the party unaccounted for.

The adepts camp outside the kaer while Thain scouts out part of the valley below, including the ruins of Old Daralon. There the dwarf scout discovers a band of pirates have encamped in the ruins of the old town. They capture Thain, believing him to be a Throalic spy. The other adepts attack the pirate camp and rescue Thain, but the captain of the pirates, a human Swordmaster named Capt. Caine, defeats Jardaal in a duel and escapes by horse before the adepts can catch her.

After a brief exploration of the area, the adepts return to the kaer to inform their people that the valley is safe and the Scourge is finally over. When they enter, they are attacked by a fire elemental that manifests through the roof of the tunnel. Fighting off the spirit, the adepts discover it came from Dianuus' tower, which still stands on a cliff above the kaer entrance.

Reaching the tower, the adepts find that many of its magical defenses are still active. They fight their way past different elemental spirits as they make their way up through the

levels of the tower, each devoted to one of the five elements.

In the greenhouse at the pinnacle of the tower, the adepts discover Sethek, who escaped to the tower and has been looting it of its magical treasures. The Nethermancer has prepared a magical gateway and escapes under the cover of darkness as the heroes fight a guardian wood elemental. He carries with him a set of stone tablets and swears the adepts have not seen the last of him.

## **The Journey to Throal**

With the joyous news that the Scourge is over, all of Kaer Daralon celebrates and the characters lead their people out of their shelter and into the light. There is much celebration and honoring of the adepts as the people of Daralon prepared to rebuild their homes and establish a new life in the valley.

To do so, they need to renew ties of trade and exchange and learn what has become of the world since the Scourge, so four groups of the kaer's young adepts are chosen to travel to the four directions for a year and a day on a journey of exploration, then return to the kaer with what they have learned. The heroes of Daralon are chosen to travel southward to Throal, to inform the Dwarf Kingdom that Daralon has re-opened and renew trading ties with the merchant houses there. From there they can travel along the Serpent or to some of the great kingdoms of the south and learn their fate.

The adepts set out on their journey, traveling through the Caucavic Mountains southward, following the Caucavic River to where it joins the Serpent.

In the spur of the mountains, the adepts encounter the dwarf settlement of Midton, some days journey from Daralon. The dwarves, colonists from Throal, are having troubles with the Trolls of the highlands. Where peaceful relations had existed with the trolls before, they now seem driven to attack the dwarves. The adepts stay with the dwarves and meet Jarren Swiftwind, a troll archer (and new player character) who believes his people have fallen under some terrible spell.





# EMERGENCE

## An Introductory Adventure for Earthdawn

Emergence is an adventure for the Earthdawn fantasy roleplaying game. The player characters are adepts from a kaer that weathered the centuries of the Scourge and is nearing the time of opening its gates to greet the outside world once again. The kaer is opening some fifty years late, unaware of current events in the outside world. This adventure is the player characters' first sight of the outside world, allowing the gamemaster to introduce them to Earthdawn and the realm of Barsaive gradually.

The player characters face the growing dissent within the kaer and are chosen to be the first adepts to journey into the outside world in over fifty years. The last scouting party failed to return, making the kaer's ruling council wary about sending another. Internal pressures in the kaer have forced the decision. The adepts must make their way through the various traps intended to protect the kaer and into the outside world. There they explore the ruins of the town their ancestors lived in, and discover the fate of the party that went before them. The italicized text introducing each section of the adventure is meant to be read to the players. They should also be provided with the information on Kaer Daralon below, since it is common knowledge among the kaer-dwellers.

The adventure includes references to the main Earthdawn (ED) rulebook as well as a few other Earthdawn products. Gamemasters may also find the Earthdawn novel *Lost Kaer* useful inspiration for its portrayal of kaer-life.

## Kaer Daralon

According to the records of the Kaer, Daralon was a prosperous town nestled in a mountain valley in the Theran province of Barsaive (exactly where in Barsaive is left up to the gamemaster). It subsisted mostly on farming the valley area and selling some of its famed ironwork and pottery, worked from red clay taken from the riverbanks. The inhabitants of the town paid their tithes to the Theran Overgovernor and their dues for the Rites of Protection and Passage that have allowed them to survive the Scourge.

Kaer Daralon was built over the course of three generations in the mountain caves above the valley. Much of the work was done by the master elf Elementalist and builder Dianuus. The natural caverns were expanded and strengthened with elemental magic, all laid out in accordance with the Theran plan. When the early signs of the Scourge came to the Daralon valley, the people entered the kaer and the wards were sealed to wait out the Long Night.

That was five hundred years ago. It is now the fifteen hundred and eighth year since the founding of the Kingdom of Throal (1508 TH). More than fifteen generations of Name-givers have lived and died in the confines of the kaer, waiting and watching the elemental clock designed by Theran magicians to tell when the time of the Scourge would be over. Fifty years ago, the sphere of True Earth stopped its descent towards the bowl of True Water. The clock has been frozen ever since.

This unexpected development has resulted in considerable debate and discussion among the leaders of the kaer, but thus far they have erred on the side of caution. The Therans predicted the Scourge would last as long as another century, but there is a growing belief in the kaer that something terrible has happened and the Scourge will never end. Some of the people have begun to despair and there is an edge of madness to life in Kaer Daralon. The people of the kaer remain hidden deep in the earth, watching, waiting and hoping for some sign that the Long Night has ended.



## The History of the Kaer

Kaer Daralon was created by the people of the town of Daralon and the inhabitants of its surrounding farms and villages. The kaer was designed to hold all of the inhabitants of the mountain valley where the town stood. This included a village of T'skrang from the nearby river and several Troll clans from the high mountains. Members of all of the different Name-giver races dwell in the kaer, so there was some friction at first. Minor incidents of violence and conflict arose and were harshly dealt with by the kaer's ruling council.

In the final days before the closing of the kaer, a party of adventurers arrived in Daralon. They claimed to be fleeing from horrors they had encountered in the foothills of the mountains. The elders of Daralon took this as a sign of the time to seal the kaer. The party of adepts took shelter there as well. Many of them became the founders of the adept traditions known in the kaer today.

Some two hundred years ago, there was an outbreak of plague in the kaer that nearly doomed all of the inhabitants. Dianuus the Master-Builder, himself stricken with the plague, used his magic to cause a rockslide that buried the access tunnel to the most plague-ridden portion of the kaer. This halted spread of the plague and saved the rest of the kaer.

Dianuus and some of the other adepts of the kaer were lost in the tragedy, along with their accumulated wisdom. Some people claim-though not too loudly-that faint noises can sometimes be heard from behind the rockfall that closed off the plague tunnels and that there are ghosts or worse that still haunt those halls. The ravages of the plague and the pressures of life within the kaer began to diminish the population of the community. So the loss of a section of the kaer did not prove overly taxing.

About fifty years ago the Council of Twelve appointed a small group of adepts to exit the kaer and explore outside. The party departed through the Guardian Gate and it was sealed behind them. They never returned. Since then, the Council and their successors has

been reluctant to allow any more such expeditions.

## Life in the Kaer

Life in Kaer Daralon is very routine and has been for as long as any can recall. Food is carefully rationed out morning, noon and night, usually meals of magically grown vegetables and similar staples with the occasional special occasion calling for meat or baked goods made from the kaer's carefully protected supply of grains. During the day the kaer's adults work the lattice farms that provide food, tend to the small herds of sheep and cave lizards in their pens or provide repairs or craft work for the kaer. In the evening troubadours and storytellers read from the Book of Tomorrow and tell tales of the outside world while illusionists entertain and enlighten with their images of the world of the ancestors before the Scourge.

Kaer Daralon is ruled by the Council of Twelve, the wisest and most capable elders among the people. The Council represents the Twelve Passions that are venerated in the kaer. Although the Council members are not always questors, many of them are, and they are chosen to represent their Passion's purview on the Council. The Council makes laws, metes out justice and administers the kaer.

The other major factions of the kaer include the Swords of Daralon (usually simply known as the Swords) and the Adept's Lodge. The Swords are a warrior sect that serves as the guardians, police and military. They keep the peace in the kaer and are the only people allowed to carry weapons.

The Adept's Lodge is made up of the kaer's surviving adept traditions, who pass on their teachings to suitable students in anticipation of the end of the Long Night. Some Disciplines have died out or were never really represented among those in the kaer. Other disciplines, like the Scout and Beastmaster, have survived in little more than a ceremonial role, since the environments intended for them are limited in the kaer. There is some resentment by kaer residents against practitioners of disciplines that are



looked upon as "useless" since they don't contribute to the survival of the community..

### **The Structure of the Kaer**

Kaer Daralon is laid out like most kaers built under the Theran plan, with a large central chamber surrounded by smaller living areas. The central cavern is lit by a massive light quartz embedded in the roof. This cavern contains the important buildings of the kaer: the Hall of Records, the Adept's Lodge, council chambers, the temple of the Passions and the garrison of the Swords as well as other administrative buildings. The central chamber also houses Crafter's Row, a long row of tents and open kiosks where the kaerfolk trade their humble arts and crafts.

The outer edges of the great cavern and several other caves are taken up by lattice farms, high frameworks where the produce that feeds the kaer is grown, aided by elemental magic and the blessings of Jaspree, the Passion of Nature.

In the center of the central chamber is a fantastic statue of the passion Garlen, ten feet tall, sculpted from rose-colored living crystal by Dianuus the Builder. Radiating out from the central plaza are six narrow roads. Five are named for the True Elements and lead to the living quarters for the people. Each living space holds a fantastic sculpture of that element made by the master-builder himself. The Fire Caves were sealed during the plague by Dianuus some two hundred years ago, but the other areas have been more than enough for the kaer's population.

The sixth road leads to a pair of orichalcum gates between two statues of fierce warriors known as the Guardian Gate. This gate leads into a maze of traps and deadfalls to the surface and the sealed entrance of the kaer.

Beneath the central cavern are deeper tunnels and caves. These were intended for population growth in the kaer, but the population has been shrinking so these areas are abandoned. Few go there save for members of the Swords or the Adept's Lodge on some strange errand or another. Kaer-lore has it that the tunnels sometimes serve as meeting places for secret cults or other

doings best hidden from the rest of the people.

### **The People of Daralon**

Current population of Kaer Daralon is about 3,000 Name-givers. The kaer was constructed for nearly twice that number, but the population has slowly declined over the centuries and some of the lower caverns and tunnels of the kaer have been abandoned, along with the loss of the Fire Caves. Strange subterranean creatures have sometimes been spotted in the lower tunnels and they are normally considered off-limits to the kaer's inhabitants. There is some concern over the declining population, and some doomsayers claim that the kaer will die out before the Scourge is over.

Most of the population of the kaer is dwarf and human. There are some elves and orks as well. Trolls and t'skrang are rare and have been the worst hit by the kaer's declining population, the t'skrang especially so. There are only thirty-six t'skrang remaining in the kaer-all that is left of an extended clan-and they fear that they may well die out in another few generations. The kaer has a few obsidimen, most of which spend their time in a state they call the Dreaming.

### **Important Name-givers**

**Pelgar**, dwarf male, Chief Wizard and Councilor. The wizard Pelgar is an elderly dwarf who came to his office nearly twenty years ago. He is a wizard of no small skill and oversees the activities of Daralon's magicians, mostly the maintenance of the kaer. A crotchety curmudgeon of a dwarf, he is the terror of magical apprentices in the kaer.

**Mabon Rus**, human male, Questor of Erendis, Councilor. Councilor Mabon is a follower of Erendis, the Passion of Order and Governance, which makes him well suited for his duties on the council of Twelve. His wisdom in matters of administration is heeded by his peers and he is well known for keeping live in the kaer running smoothly. Mabon is fair but firm, with a strong reputation as a disciplinarian among the children of the kaer. In truth, Mabon is



leader of a secret society of kaer-dwellers who worship the Mad Passion Dis.

**Meer'resh T'Lassor**, female t'skrang, Councilor. Councilor Meer'resh is the lahala (leader) of the surviving t'skrang clan in Kaer Daralon. She is fairly young for her role, the old matriarch of the clan having passed on only two years ago. She is considered level-headed compared to some of her brethren, who clamor increasingly for action from the Council.

**Netzach Kol**, ork male, Master of Memory, Keeper of the Book of Tomorrow and Scholar. Netzach is nearing the age of fifty, ancient for an ork. He credits his long life to this love of knowledge and claims that he won't die until he knows all there is to know. He lovingly tends to the kaer's precious stores of books, scrolls and other heirlooms in the Hall of Time. He knows all of the lore and history of Daralon and can often be found telling stories to children in the Plaza in the evenings.

**Onara Stonebones**, troll female, High Sword of Daralon. Captain Stonebones is the High Sword, commander of the Swords of Daralon. The troll warrior wields her massive stone broadsword like it was a toy. Her booming laugh and good cheer make her a welcome companion and a popular leader. Onara claims she does not involve herself in politics, concerning herself only with keeping the peace.

### Troubled Times

You are on your way to the central part of the kaer for an evening of stories and tales of the outside world. Since your initiation as adepts, you have thought of little else but the tales passed down by your ancestors of the fantastic world outside your underground shelter: about the sun, the stars, the verdant forests and the great cities like Travar and the dwarf kingdom of Throal. The tales are your tie with that world, that none have seen in hundreds of years.

As you make your way through the great cavern towards the central square, you hear a commotion coming from Crafter's Row. An argument of some sort, punctuated by a loud crash. From the path, you can see a group of

young people have overturned an old woman's cart, smashing a load of pottery on the ground.

There are at least as many young hooligans as their are player characters. Like many of the people of Kaer Daralon, they are restless and discontent with their underground life. In the case of these young punks, they've chosen to entertain themselves by causing trouble. The old woman said something that Jos, the leader of the small band, didn't like.

It's up to the player characters whether or not they choose to interfere. As adepts, they have all sworn to use their abilities to protect the kaer and its people. If any of the characters are members of Swords, then they have a duty to intervene, otherwise, they can do as they choose. If the adepts do intervene, things will become tense. They discover the ruffians have crude weapons, farming tools. The player characters (unless they are members of the Swords) are unarmed, since kaer-dwellers are not allowed to carry weapons. The adepts should be shocked and horrified that their fellow kaer-dwellers should be considering violence.

Some quick and clever roleplaying may be able to convince the hooligans to apologize to the woman and go on their way peacefully. Otherwise, there's going to be a fight. Use the statistics for the Guard Veteran (ED, p. 297) for the ruffians, but reduce all of their Steps and Defense Ratings by 2. They have no armor and only simple weapons. Members of the Swords show up in short order to break up a fight or to talk to everyone involved if the adepts managed to avoid a fight. The gamemaster can decide when to have the Swords appear; 3-4 rounds into a combat is probably a good time.

If the adepts have killed anyone in the fight, they will be arrested and an investigation begun. Remind players that these are not monsters they're dealing with, they're misguided young people; their own neighbors and possibly friends. Using deadly force against them would be overreacting, to say the least. Minor injuries will be overlooked by the Swords, but they will still ask the adepts to accompany them to speak



with the members of the Council.

### **The Council's Chosen**

You arrive at the Council Hall in the central chamber. The Hall is a circular building cut from dark gray stone, pierced with tall, narrow windows and a wide entryway flanked by carved pillars. You enter the main chamber of the Hall, one of the largest rooms in the whole kaer. It is surrounded by a high bench where the twelve members of the Council sit. As you stand in the middle of the room, light by the glow of light crystals placed around the room, and look up at the grim faces of the council members, you feel that something far more important than a conflict in Crafter's Row.

Mabon Rus, the head of the Council, stands and leans forward, his hands resting flat on the bench.

"Adepts," he begins in a sonorous voice, "you have been brought before us to consider a serious matter. The regrettable incident in Crafter's Row is only a symptom of the disease that plagues our people. That disease is the fever of madness from our imprisonment below the Earth. Although the walls of our kaer protect us from the ravages of the Scourge, they have become a prison for our bodies and our spirits. For five centuries we have waited for the Scourge to pass, and now the time has come. If Daralon is to survive, we must send another scouting party beyond the Guardian Gate, to the world outside!"

There are two ways the adepts may be called before the Council. Either they handled the trouble with the ruffians well, and the Council believes this is a sign from the Passions that the adepts are the people they are looking for to take on this dangerous missions. Or they handled the whole situation in Crafter's Row badly, perhaps even killing one or more of the troublemakers. In this case, the Council considers the adepts skilled enough and dangerous enough to make them expendable, therefore useful.

In either case, the Council has chosen the adepts to be the first Name-givers to leave

the kaer in fifty years to discover what has become of the world outside. They are the hope of Daralon. Mabon Rus gravely announces the Council's decision and asks the adepts if they will take up the challenge.

If the players refuse, they're probably not getting the point. Gently remind them that the dream of every adept is to explore the world outside the kaer, the chance to leave the confines of the shelter where they have lived all their lives. This is their opportunity to be heroes. If the adepts were brought before the Council for punishment, the offer is backed up by the fact that adepts who refuse face imprisonment, a fact the Council will use as leverage to convince them.

Once the player character accept, (willingly or through coercion) Mabon Rus tells them they have a night and a day to prepare. They will leave at once. The kaer is a simmering pressure cooker of repressed fear and resentment that may boil over at any moment. Their departure will be announced at the gathering the next evening.

### **Beyond the Guardian Gate**

The announcement of your impending journey beyond the Guardian Gate electrifies the populace of the kaer. Spirits are higher than they have been in longer than you can remember. You gather the equipment you will need and say farewell to family and friends, promising you will return soon. The night of your departure, the people of Daralon are all gathered in the great central chamber. You walk down the road to the cheers and best wishes of the people. When you stand before the giant statues flanking the orichalcum-laced gates, the aged wizard Pelgar nods gravely to you and speaks the spells passed down to him from Dianuus the Master-Builder himself.

### **Gates open, and the world awaits**

Before the adepts leave the kaer, they are briefed by the Council of Twelve. They will leave the kaer via the Guardian Gate and make their way through the section of Kaer Daralon known as the Stair, which leads to the massive main gate to the surface. The Stair is layered with various traps and



defenses built to keep Horrors from breaking into the kaer. Unfortunately, plans for these traps, kept in the Hall of Time, have been lost. The Council has kept this information secret, so as not to dampen the hopes of the people, but the adepts will have to brave the hazards of the traps alone. The Council gives them a talisman created by Dianuus to open the main gates of the kaer.

To aid them, the Council also supplies the adepts with two healing potions and a last chance salve. This gives the gamemaster so leeway if the adepts get badly hurt or one of them is killed by one of the threats in the adventure. If desired, the Council can provide the adepts with other minor magical items, like blood charms, but the gamemaster shouldn't be too generous (the kaer's resources are limited, and they can only risk so much on this venture).

Once the adept party passes through the Guardian Gate, the doors are closed behind them, only to be opened again when they return and use a magical key (also given to them by the Council) to send a signal through the wards of the kaer. The adepts are alone in the Stair.

The entry area of the kaer consists of three long, low halls, lined with carved pillars. A spiral staircase at the end of the hall connects it to the one above it in a staggered arrangement (see map). At the end of the final hall is the Great Entrance Hall and the orichalcum doors to the outside. The floor and surfaces of the halls are covered with fine dust and dirt accumulated through the years. Barely visible in the layers of dust are the fifty year-old tracks of the last scouting party sent out from the kaer.

Each Hall also has a trap built into it, intended to kill or at least injure any Horrors that might be able to break through the wards and the Rites of Protection and Passage. The traps of the first two halls are still active and dangerous, while the third trap in the great hall was triggered long ago (see *Those Who Have Gone Before*, below). The statistics of the remaining traps are as follows.

**Spear Trap:** Detection Difficulty: 8, Disarm Difficulty: 8, Trigger Condition: Pressure plate, Trap Initiative: 8, Trap Effect: Damage Step 13

**Ward Trap:** Detection Difficulty: 10, Spell Defense: 10, Disarm Difficulty: 11, Trigger Condition: The trap makes a Spellcasting Test (Step 15) against the Spell Defense of the characters passing it. If the test is successful, the trap triggers its effect. Trap Initiative: 10, Trap Effect: Fireball spell, Damage Step 18

If the characters successfully detect the traps (with a Perception Test against the Detection Difficulty) they can attempt to disarm them. The spear trap can be disarmed with a successful Dexterity Test against the Disarm Difficulty, while the Ward Trap can be disarmed with a successful Spellcasting Test against the Disarm Difficulty. A successful casting of the Dispel Magic spell that overcomes the ward trap's Disarm Difficulty will also disarm it.

### Those Who Have Gone Before

As you enter the final hall of the Stair, you see the fate of the scouting party that left Daralon before you. Four corpses lie in the hall. Three were killed by various wounds while the fourth lies buried beneath a tumbled pile of stones, along with the pale, white corpse of some hideous, bloated creature. Their flesh is withered and gray, almost mummified in the dry air, covered in a layer of dust. Their weapons and armor are spotted with corrosion, but otherwise as serviceable as the day they left the shelter of the central kaer.

One of the bodies lies against the orichalcum outer doors of the kaer, still sealed. The doors that lead to the outside world.

The scouting party that left Kaer Daralon years ago ran afoul of a minor Horror. It turned the adepts against each other and killed most of them, then invaded the mind of the survivor and attempted to force him to return to the kaer. The adept was able to overcome the Horror's control long enough to close the doors of the kaer and trigger the



deadfall trap in the upper hall, both the adept and the Horror were crushed and the kaer was safe.

The Horror gained its revenge, however. With a final act of blood magic, it animated the bodies of the adepts as cadaver men (ED, p. 288), charged to destroy anyone else who tried to leave the kaer. When the adepts approach the orichalcum gates, the cadaver men rise up and attack. They have weapons and armor to fight with, so the gamemaster should adjust their statistics accordingly. Remember, any wound inflicted on a cadaver man causes it to go berserk, attacking up to four times each combat turn.

Once the adepts have overcome the cadaver men, they can use the talisman given to them by the council to open the outer doors and exit the kaer.

### **The Angry Gargoyle**

The great doors of the kaer grind open slowly, allowing a breath of cool, fresh air to stir the ages of dust settled in the great hall. You breathe in that taste of the outside world and think you have never smelled anything so sweet. You prepare yourself for an attack as the doors open. For a Horror to come screeching through the opening to kill and ravage, but nothing comes. Finally, the heavy doors open enough for you to see the outside world for the first time.

It is dark outside, and a gentle breeze stirs the grasses of the hillside and makes the leaves of the trees rustle. You stand for a moment outside the faint light of the entrance, taking it all in. It's more wonderful and incredible than you ever imagined. The valley of Daralon stretches out below you, gray, black and silver in the light of a nearly full moon. You can see the glimmer of the river below and the bright gleam of the stars above you. Near the river, in the distance, are dark stumps and tumbled piles of stone that can only be the remains of the town of Daralon, the home of your ancestors.

As the doors of the kaer swing slowly closed, you set foot on the ancient, overgrown trail for the home of your people.

Stress the wonder of the adepts seeing the outside world for the very first time.

Remember, they have never seen the night sky or a forest or a mountainside except in pictures and tales. The players should feel something of their characters' awe at finally leaving their kaer. They should also be eager to explore the ruins of their ancestral home, although their enthusiasm might be tempered by a justified concern. They still have no idea what awaits them in the outside world, and the presence of the Horror-corpse in the great hall should give them some cause for concern.

From the vantage of the kaer entrance, the adepts can see most of the valley below. A river cuts through the center of the valley, and the hillsides are heavily forested. On a high ridge overlooking the kaer entrance is the ancient stone tower of Dianuus, the elemental. The tower's wards and magical protections allowed it to survive the Scourge intact, and it stands silent watch over the valley. The ruins of old Daralon lie near the river at the bottom of the valley. They are mostly dark, although flickering lights can sometimes be seen there.

Fortunately for the adepts, the ruins of Daralon are haunted by enemies much more mortal than the Horrors. A band of river pirates have taken the ruins as a hideout and a place to stash some of their booty. They rely on local rumors and legends that the ruins are haunted, legends they encourage using illusions and strange lights to scare away intruders. The pirates know nothing of the kaer, hidden behind camouflaged doors. They are aware of Dianuus' tower above the kaer, but avoid it because of the tower's powerful magical wards and defenses.

Recently, the pirates encountered a gargoyle hunting for new territory in the valley. They drove it off, but the gargoyle only retreated further up the valley, hiding out in a rocky outcropping and nursing its wound. As the adepts make their way down towards the ruins of Daralon, the gargoyle spots them and tries to ambush them, springing out from behind its hiding place to attack. The creature has suffered some damage; it has 4 points of Current Damage and an unhealed Wound. The player characters should be able to fight it off. If the



gargoyle suffers another two Wounds, it flies away. Otherwise, it fights viciously, making use of Aggressive Attacks.

### **The Pirates of Daralon**

You approach the ruins of Daralon cautiously. There may be more creatures like the one you encountered in the highlands, or even worse, lurking there. You see some flickering light among the tumbled walls and structures of Old Daralon and move as quietly as possible to avoid alerting whatever might be there. As you draw closer, you hear voices and see dark shapes moving around a fire burning in the center of ruined structure. Whatever haunts Daralon, it looks very much like other Name-givers.

There are six pirates in the camp, led by a second-circle swordmaster named Caine. Caine is a human woman who wears an astral sensitive eye in place of the one she lost in battle and wields her curved saber with ruthless efficiency. The remainder of the pirates are not adepts. They will investigate any strange noises or the like in pairs. If the adepts attack, the pirates will fight them fiercely. If things appear to be turning against them, they will attempt to escape using a pair of small boats on the river.

Use the t'skrang swordmaster adept archetype (ED, p. 81) for Caine. Remove the t'skrang racial modifications, increase all of the talents by 1 rank and give her Riposte and Throwing Weapons at Rank 1. Use the Guard Veteran (ED, p. 297) for the other pirates. Drop the magical talent and give them dwarf swords and leather armor. If the number of pirates is too much of a challenge for the player characters, reduce their numbers. If the adepts mow right through them, you can have more pirates show up to help out their comrades.

The pirates' treasure consists of three cloth sacks holding coins worth a total of 500 silver pieces (mostly Throalic and t'skrang mint). They are kept in a heavy locked chest along with a set of maps of the valley and the surrounding area (which the adepts may find more valuable than the silver).

### **The Return**

After overcoming the pirates, you spend some time exploring the valley and the ruins of Daralon. There are no signs of Horrors or other dangers to your people, so you return to the kaer to give Daralon the welcome news of the outside world. You are treated to a hero's welcome and all of the kaerfolk are eager to hear your tales of the outside world. The Council honors you in a speech to the people and says that Daralon will open its door to the outside, allowing the people to rebuild the home their ancestors left behind so long ago. The Long Night of the Scourge is finally over, and a new world awaits!

Encourage the players to relate their story to the Council and the people of the kaer. Award Legend Points based on the creatures the adepts have overcome in the adventure, along with any treasure they have acquired (ED, p. 242). They get 50 Legend Points for successfully clearing the valley of danger (the pirates and the gargoyle), they also get 50 Legend Points for returning to Kaer Daralon with news of the outside world. The gamemaster can award up to 50 additional Legend Points for creative roleplaying and heroics.

### **Further Adventures**

Once the adepts have completed their mission into the outside world and returned to Kaer Daralon, there are many other opportunities for adventure. The gamemaster can use some of the adventure seeds below (along with other Earthdawn products from FASA) to continue the adepts' adventures in the Age of Legend, kicking off a full-fledged Earthdawn campaign.

#### **The Tower of Dianuus.**

The tower of the master Elementalist Dianuus still stands on the cliff-face overlooking the kaer and old Daralon. It was magically sealed by Dianuus before the Scourge and has remained (apparently) intact. What secrets might it contain, and what magical traps and creatures protect them? Perhaps the council asks the player characters to explore the tower or they might choose to do so themselves. Magical items



like the Talismans of Dianuus (from Arcane Mysteries of Barsaive) might be found in the tower, along with some of Dianuus' magical lore.

### **The Fire Caves.**

The Fire Caves have been sealed for centuries, since a plague nearly wiped out Kaer Daralon. The plague is long since dead, but the kaer-dwellers don't know that for certain. Treasures lie hidden in the ruins of the caverns, including the body of Dianuus himself and, perhaps, some of his magical items (like the aforementioned talismans). The source of the strange noises from the Fire Caves may be nothing more than settling of loose stone, or perhaps someone (or something) has animated the corpses of the plague victims, creating an army of cadaver men for some sinister purpose. It could be a rogue nethermancer from the kaer, who has found a secret way into the sealed caves, or perhaps the horror killed at the gates of the kaer is not as dead as everyone thinks....

### **Gargoyle Flight**

The gargoyle the adepts encountered outside the kaer was only a scout for a small band of gargoyles looking for a new home in the area near Daralon. If it escaped, it may return with allies. If it was killed, its brethren might come looking for it. The kaer's new settlement might be troubled by gargoyle attacks until the adepts can track the creatures down and drive them from the valley permanently.

### **Journey to Throal**

Now that the Kaer is open, the people of Daralon are eager to renew their ties with the outside world and discover the state of things. The gamemaster can build a long

series of adventures around sending the adepts on an extended scouting mission into the outside world. They can go to the Kingdom of Throal and report the opening of their kaer. Imagine their surprise when they learn that Barsaive is no longer a Theran province, and Throal has rebelled against the Empire! Will the adepts choose to involve themselves in the politics of the province? This can provide a lead-in to the events described in the adventure Prelude to War: An Earthdawn Epic.

### **The Mad Passions**

During the Scourge three of the Passions went mad (as described in Earthdawn). The people of Daralon know nothing of this. The followers of the Mad Passions living in the kaer have carefully concealed the true nature of their patrons over the years, existing as secret cults, while maintaining a facade of respectability. One of their questors, Mabon Rus, is even a member of the Council! Now that the kaer is open, what will the Mad Passion cults in the kaer do? Gamemasters may find Secret Societies of Barsaive useful for information on the Mad Passion cults.

### **Pirates of the Serpent**

The player characters have disrupted the operations of the river pirates, but they haven't overcome all of the pirate-band. Others will eventually come to find out what became of their fellows, leading to a conflict between the newly opened kaer and the pirates, who may want to loot the kaer of its treasures. This can lead to adventures along the Serpent River or elsewhere in Barsaive.





# THREAD ITEMS

## The Bone Bell of Kaer Tallorias

Aye, of course I've a tale for you, traveler, that is what we troubadours do, is it not? And since you are so interested in my music, I will tell you a story about a most strange musical instrument indeed.

Near the beginning of the Scourge, many name-givers throughout the land of Barsaive were retreating into their kaers and sealing them behind them to wait out the long centuries of the Scourge. Save for some of the Elves and the long-lived Obsidimen, those who entered the kaers knew that they would never see the outside world again. They could only hope that their great-grandchildren would be able to emerge safely from shelter into a world free of the horrors. This brought many people to despair and the sealing of the kaers was a time of great loss for all of the name-givers.

One such kaer was Named Kaer Talloria, after the magician who helped to build it. Talloria worked unceasingly to excavate the shelter for her people and create the orichalcum runes and wards that would hold the horrors at bay for the centuries of the Scourge. She was tireless in her efforts, working long into the night only to be up the next morning before anyone else to begin work again. She was driven to protect her people.

As the first horrors infested the land, Talloria studied them carefully, gathering all of the information that she could about these creatures. She began to grow increasingly concerned as all of the reports of the horrors indicated that they were terrible in strength and power and that the worst was yet to come, for the first horrors to appear were weak for their kind according to the Therans. Talloria began to fear that the defenses provided by the Therans would not be enough to protect the people.

She began researching the horrors, and carefully examining the remains of the

horrors that could be recovered, to formulate another means of defense against them. She also delved deeply into the arts of nethermancy, studying the ways of the netherworlds in hopes of learning more about the nature of the horrors and how they could be defeated and kept at bay from the feast of name-giver flesh and souls they desired. Talloria worked even harder than ever, locked away in her laboratory, consumed with a fierce passion to discover a way. Many people of the village grew concerned for her welfare but they respected their magician and feared the horrors, so they said nothing and waited.

In time, Talloria began work on something in the central meeting area of the newly constructed kaer. Her work was concealed behind a misty curtain of elemental air, so none of the people knew what it was that she was building. But they all trusted Talloria and so they waited and watched until the time came for them to seal the kaer.

The horrors had grown too numerous on the surface for the people to remain there any longer. Word had come that even mighty Thera had sealed themselves behind their dome of True Air and Fire to wait out the long night of the Scourge. Attacks from ravening horrors were coming almost daily and the people of the village retreated into their kaer and Talloria enacted the rituals to seal the portals of the shelter and activate the magical wards given to them by the Therans to keep out the horrors.

Not long after Kaer Talloria was sealed, the sorceress revealed to the people the artifact that she had so carefully constructed to keep the forces of the horrors at bay, should the protections of the kaer fail them. It was a great bell of bronze woven with True Earth and Air. The frame, structure and clapper of the great bell were carved from bone - the bones of the victims of the first horrors, bones that still resonated with the terror of the coming Scourge. At first the



people of the kaer were wary of such a gift, touched as it was with the power of blood magic. Some feared that the bell might be tainted with the power of the horrors, but Talloria was steadfast in her insistence that the bell's enchantments would help to keep the horrors away.

It was only a short time after the sealing of the kaer that the bell was first used. Some kind of powerful horror attacked that kaer, so mighty that it shook the whole of the mountain where Kaer Talloria was dug. It was as if the horror intended to uproot the entire kaer. While the people huddled in fear of what might be outside their shelter, Talloria rang the great bell she had created and it sent forth a peal that was like the crying of tortured souls, the screams of those victims of the horrors. The peal of the bell echoed all throughout the kaer. In a matter of moments, the terrible sounds of the creature outside stopped and all was still once again. The people hailed Talloria as a hero and gave many thanks to her for saving them with her creation.

Many years passed, and Talloria passed the guardianship of the Bone Bell down to her successors. The magics of the bell were carefully maintained, for the people considered it their last line of defense against the horrors. The bones of many of their kaer's dead went into repairing, maintaining and strengthening the bell's enchantments to make it a lasting weapon against the horrors. The magicians who maintained the bell became an Order whom the people of the kaer knew and respected for their great power, but also feared for their dabblings in nethermancy and blood magic needed to maintain the artifact. The bell was used several times over the centuries to drive off horrors that threatened to breach the kaer and threaten its inhabitants.

After generations had passed, the end of the Scourge predicted by the scholars of Thera failed to come about. The sphere of true earth had stopped its descent towards the bowl of true water and had held steady there for years. The people of the kaer were greatly concerned. Was the Scourge over?

Was it safe for them to emerge into the sunlight once again?

The magicians of the Order of the Bone Bell thought not. It was a trick, they said, a foul deception of the horrors intended to make the people believe that they were safe while, in fact, the horrors lay in wait for them outside of the safety of their sheltering kaer. The magicians declared that the people would have to wait and be patient while they ferreted out the meaning of this omen.

More time passed and with each passing day, the people grew more and more restless. Dark rumors circulated and resentment against the magician-priests grew. Many said that the magicians sought only to maintain their power over the people, that they knew that the Scourge was over and they had stopped the progress of the sphere of true earth themselves so that they could rule over the closed kaer forever. The time had come and surely the horrors were long since gone. Open talk of rebellion began and the ruling magicians were forced to take harsh measures with those who spoke treason against them, but this only stoked the fires of rebellion higher.

Eventually, the people of Kaer Talloria rose up against the Order of the Bone Bell and killed them all in the center courtyard of the kaer where the bell stood. They then threw open the gates of the kaer to emerge into the outside world. It was only then that they discovered that Talloria's artifact did not work quite as she had planned. The horrors that were supposed to have been driven away by the bell over the years were in fact a single horror trapped in astral space near the kaer by the power of the bell. With the doors of the kaer open and the magicians slain, the horror took its vengeance on the people of Talloria and left the kaer a haunted monument to their folly.

I heard the tale from one of the few survivors of the kaer and she told me that the Bone Bell of Talloria still remains in the ruins of their kaer. I'm sure the horrors would not want such an item to fall into the hands of other Name-Givers, but who knows if they were able to destroy it?

That is the tale, for such is the truth.



## Adventure Ideas

The gamemaster can decide if the Bone Bell of Kaer Talloria still exists and, if so, whether or not it can still be found in the ruins of the ancient kaer. Perhaps the bell was removed from the kaer by horrors (or their agents), robbers, or explorers such as the player characters. If so, it might have traveled the length and breadth of Barsaive to come to rest in some hidden lair or some scholar's collection of artifacts. If the bell has remained hidden in the ruins of the kaer, it will no doubt be guarded, perhaps by traps laid by various horrors to keep name-givers away from the power of the bell or by a horror-cult devoted to protecting it from outsiders.

If the characters do discover the bone bell, they will need to decide what to do with the artifact and if its power is worth the high price that it carries with it. The Bone Bell is an item of great interest to those involved in studying or hunting horrors, such as Horror Stalkers and Lightbearers.

## The Bone Bell

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 18

The Bone Bell of Talloria is a large bronze bell of about half a human's height, growing greenish with age. The outside of the bell is decorated with a complex web of delicately carved bones and the clapper on the inside is made up of many bones strung on a fine copper chain. A heavy metal ring is attached to the top of the bell, allowing it to be hung from a support frame or the like. When sounded, the bell gives off a deep shrieking and moaning sound that echoes for a great distance.

Thread Ranks

*Rank 1* (Cost: 300)

Key Knowledge: The character must know that this is the Bone Bell of Kaer Talloria.

Effect: The ringing of the bone bell provides +1 Spell Defense for all Name-Givers within hearing range against the powers of Horrors and Horror constructs.

*Rank 2* (Cost: 500)

Key Knowledge: The character must learn

who created the bell and what discipline she followed. Talloria was a human elemental who also practiced the arts of nethermancy.

Effect: The sound of the bell provides +2 Spell Defense against Horrors and Horror constructs.

*Rank 3* (Cost: 800)

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the location of Kaer Talloria and the fate of its people.

Deed: The character must travel to the location of Kaer Talloria and ensure that all of its people are given a proper burial, after which the kaer must be sealed and the true fate of its people carved upon its entryway. If accomplished, this deed is worth 1,200 Legend Points.

Effect: All horrors and horror constructs within earshot of the bell are considered Harried for as long as it is rung. All name-givers within earshot gain +1 to their Social Defense against the attacks of Horrors and Horror constructs.

*Rank 4* (Cost: 1,300)

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the names of those Name-Givers whose bones cover the bell.

Effect: The ringing of the bell can ward off horrors. The ringer can make a Willpower or Willforce test while ringing the bell. This becomes the difficulty for a Willpower test required by the horror to come within sound of the bell. This effect lasts for as long as the bell is rung.

At this rank and higher, the sound of the bell also affects name-givers who hear it like the Arcane Mutterings talent (Earthdawn, p.97) at Step 15. This effect occurs automatically when any of the bell's powers above Rank 3 are used, despite the wishes of the bell ringer. All characters within hearing range are affected.

*Rank 5* (Cost: 2,100)

Key Knowledge: The character must learn the Name of the Horror that destroyed Kaer Talloria.

Effect: At the cost of 3 points of Strain, the character sounding the bell can force any



horror that can hear the ringing of the bell into astral space by making a successful opposed Willforce test against the Horror's Willpower or Willforce. If the character is successful, the horror is forced back into astral space for a number of days equal to the level of success.

*Rank 6 (Cost: 3,200)*

**Deed:** The character must learn the fate and whereabouts of the horror that slew Kaer Talloria. This deed is worth 4,000 Legend Points.

**Effect:** At the cost of 6 points of permanent damage and a successful Willforce test against the horror's Spell Defense, the bell-ringer can trap a horror in the vicinity of the bell. The horror is trapped in its present form (physical or astral) and cannot leave earshot of the bell for a year and a day. The character who sacrificed the blood magic may then renew it at the end of that time to continue the effect. The horror can escape only by the death of the sustaining character or the destruction of the bell. The horror's powers are not reduced or limited in any way.

## **Iceheart**

Iceheart is an arrow of uncommon manufacture, its head being entirely chipped from a near perfect ice crystal from the Twilight Peaks. The shaft is carved and shaped from the wood of an oak tree from Cara Fahd, and the fletching is done with woven fern leaves picked from below the same tree. It was constructed by a Troll Archer named Jarren Swiftwind, who had no intention of giving it its unusual properties.

These properties came from the tainted ice spirit that resides within the ice crystal. It is a spirit of cold determination that tempts and influences the user of the arrow in an ever more powerful attempt to control their body outright.

The arrow behaves as a normal arrow designed for a rather large bow until a thread is attached to it, then it begins its insidious quest. Each time the thread rank attached to the arrow is increased the spirit attacks the will of the user trying to increase its hold on

them, if the final thread is attached and the spirit still does not have control the spirit gets one attempt per month or one per week while in the Twilight Peaks. The spirit rolls its willpower step plus the rank of the thread versus the spell defense of the user. If the spirit succeeds the user's willpower step decreases by one versus this controlling effect only. On an excellent success the user lowers two steps while on a poor result or lower the wielder regains a step. If the user's willpower step decreases to zero or below the spirit has taken control of the body and begins to transfer its pattern into it.

This process can only be made permanent in the Twilight Peaks, so the spirit will take the body there in the fastest way possible. When fired the arrow adds the thread rank attached to it to the damage step of the bow it is being fired from in addition to the other powers it confers.

*Rank 1 Cost: 200*

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must know the name of Iceheart.

**Effect:** The wielder is considered to be under the influence of a Resist Cold spell. This makes him nearly immune to natural cold weather allowing him to stand drastic decreases in temperature

*Rank 2 Cost: 300*

**Effect:** By firing the arrow into a target the wielder can cause the effects of the Icy Surface spell to be invoked at that point. The effect step of the spell is equal to the wielder's willpower plus the rank of the thread attached to Iceheart.

*Rank 3 Cost: 500*

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must know the name of the Crystalsmith within the Blackfang clan that helped Jarren Swiftwind fashion the arrowhead.

**Effect:** Any living target hit by Iceheart is effected by its body numbing cold and is considered to be harried for a number of rounds based on the level of success achieved in the attack: average being one round, good



two rounds, excellent three rounds, and extraordinary four rounds.

**Rank 4 Cost: 800**

**Effect:** The wielder can extend the bone numbing effect of the arrow by spending two points of strain to encase the target in a thin coat of ice. The target will then be unable to move for 1 minute or until they break the ice. The difficulty to do this is equal to wielder's willpower step plus the rank of the attached thread.

**Rank 5 Cost: 1300**

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must learn the name of the spirit that gives Iceheart its power. The wielder will need to make a willpower test versus the spirit to be able to tell anyone else, however.

**Effect:** The wielder can cause the effect of a Drastic Temperature spell (cold only) to be enacted at the point of impact of the arrow. The effect step is equal to the willpower step of the wielder plus the rank of the thread (5).

## The Spirit of Iceheart

The spirit within the crystal arrowhead is a Strength 1 air spirit giving it a willpower step of 8. It retains all of its powers but can not use them until it is free of the arrowhead. As the spirit's hold on the wielder increases the wielder changes becoming more cold and distant from their friends and family. A list of possible changes are below. The more hold the spirit has upon the wielder the more drastic the changes.

- Decreasing tolerance for heat.
- Quick to become annoyed, but inability to get truly angry.
- Eye color changes to become a lighter and lighter blue.
- Body temperature decreases causing others slight discomfort when touching them (body feels cold).
- Inability to adapt to normal social occasions.
- A tendency to say everything that

comes to mind, inability to hold back.

- Decrease in the amount of caring and compassion the wielder shows.
- Inability to accept changes, tendency to be stubborn.
- Feeling and understanding decrease.
- Disregard for the feelings of others.

## Night's Shadow

*(by Andy Frades)*

Night's Shadow appears to be a medium length staff with veins of a hard silvery metal and capped at each end by the same. It has along its length three separate grips, one in the middle and two placed halfway along the shaft toward either end. In this form it is considered a quarterstaff for purposes of damage and use as a melee weapon. Once a thread is tied to Night's Shadow it begins to show its alternate form, that of a powerful magical bow.

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 24

### Thread Ranks

**Rank 1 Cost: 200**

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must know that the bow is named Night's Shadow.

**Effect:** The act of weaving a thread to Night's Shadow actually constructs the mystical bowstring out of moonbeams. From this point on Night's Shadow will bend at the wielder's will to form a bow of exceeding quality. The weapon now functions as an Elven Warbow as well as a melee weapon causing STR+3 damage.

**Rank 2 Cost: 300**

**Effect:** Weaving this thread grants the wielder low-light vision as well as increasing the damage done by the weapon to STR+6 as a bow and STR+4 in melee.

**Rank 3 Cost: 500**

**Key Knowledge:** The wielder must know the name of the creator of the weapon, a fair



skinned immortal Elf named Glamdring Shadowdancer.

Effect: Each week the wielder may charge the bow with a number of Shadow Arrows equal to their perception step plus their thread rank attached to Night's Shadow up to a maximum of 40. The ritual must be done at night and Archers may add their half magic step to this number. A Shadow Arrow may be used in place of a normal arrow at any time doing normal damage and reducing the number of Shadow Arrows stored by one. After impact Shadow Arrows dissolve into the darkness from which they are spawned.

*Rank 4 Cost: 800*

Effect: Night's Shadow now does STR+8 damage as a bow and STR+5 as a melee weapon. Its range steps are increased to 60/300/450.

*Rank 5 Cost: 1300*

Deed: Glamring Shadowdancer contacted a spirit of a slain Archer to help him infuse his bow with great power. To perform this deed the wielder must find something of import to a deceased Archer's life and use it to contact the spirit. Contacting this spirit takes a lengthy ritual that must be performed at night. The wielder must convince the deceased Archer to infuse the bow with their cold dark spirit. This may not be an easy task depending upon who the wielder contacts. Night's Shadow itself is considered an artifact of import for Glamring Shadowdancer himself. This deed is worth 1300 legend points in addition to any gained from accomplishing any of the peculiar tasks that a spirit of a deceased Archer may require.

Effect: At this rank Night's Shadow becomes infused with the hidden powers of shadow. Any attack made with Night's Shadow reduces the success level required for an armor defeating hit by one.

*Rank 6 Cost: 2100*

Effect: The wielder of Night's Shadow may borrow from the cloaking powers of the night to merge with their own shadow for a short time. For the cost of 2 points of strain the

wielder may merge with their shadow, becoming a two dimensional being for a maximum of thread rank rounds, incapable of initiating or being harmed by purely physical attacks. Attacks which target spell defense and/or mystic armor may still affect the wielder dependent upon their special effect and the ruling of the gamemaster. While in shadow form the wielder may move upon any surface as if they were a shadow at a rate up to their unmodified combat movement. Also due to their shadowy form those in this state are harder to detect, requiring a good success to notice them in well lit circumstances, and an excellent success in poorer lighting conditions.

*Rank 7 Cost: 3400*

Deed: Glamring Shadowdancer died in the service of a great dragon, defending its lair. To perform this deed the wielder must aid a dragon in the defense of its lair using Night's Shadow. The deed must involve a real danger to the wielder and must be something that the dragon would find troublesome or dangerous to deal with on their own. This deed is worth 3400 legend points on top of any earned for actions taken in the defense.

Effect: The wielder of Night's Shadow may store up to thread rank points of karma within the bow. Spending a point of karma from the bow requires the expenditure of 1 point of strain per point of karma used and does not count as the wielder's karma expenditure for the round. Strain from this ability is taken after the action is completed.

## **Wyrmseeker**

Wyrmseeker is the magical sword wielded by the dwarf hero Narn Dragon-slayer. What is not known is that Narn's blade drew its power from the horror Verjigorm, the Hunter of Great Dragons, and that Narn was a willing pawn of the Horror in exchange for power and pretiege. Narn was slain by the elven elemental and dragon-friend Dianuus and his sword and shield giving into the care of one of the dragons for safekeeping. Unfortunately the wyrm died during the Scourge and Wyrmseeker was found by the unsuspecting adepts of kaer



**Daralon.****Spell Defense:** 21**Number of Threads:** 2**Rank 1 Cost:** 500

**Key Knowledge:** The character must know that this is the sword Wyrmsseeker, wielded once by Narn Dragon-slayer.

**Effect:** Wyrmsseeker does STR+6 steps damage. It also may detect the presence of dragons nearby as well as the minions and constructs of Verjigorm like the shadows or minor horrors.

**Rank 2 Cost:** 800

**Effect:** Wyrmsseeker's damage increases to STR+8 steps and it ignores the Armored Scales power of dragons, allowing it to inflict armor-defeating hits on an Excellent Success as normal.

**Rank 3 Cost:** 1,300

**Key Knowledge:** After the sword's Rank 2 thread is woven, it draws the attention of Verjigorm. The horror is able to Horror Mark the sword-bearer and begins to use its Thought Worm power to slowly infiltrate the character's dreams. The horror sends information and instructions through these dreams and-if the character resists-it sends pain and injury as well. The sword-wielder has strange adventures in an alien world in his dreams, and may even earn legend points for his actions there. Verjigorm prefers that a puppet resist at first, and any Legend Points gained from the Thought Worm power can then be poured into increasing Wyrmsseeker's thread rank.

**Effect:** The wielder of the sword gains the ability to use the horror power of Corrupt Karma, at a level of ability equal to the wielder's Willpower step plus the rank of the sword's thread. This power can be used to counter the Disrupt Fate power of dragons with a successful Corrupt Karma test against the dragon's Spell Defense.

**Rank 4 Cost:** 2,100

**Effect:** Wyrmsseeker's wielder may use the Horror power of Cursed Luck at a step equal

to his Willpower step plus the rank of the sword's thread. The sword also does STR+10 steps damage (+12 steps against dragons and drakes).

**Rank 5 Cost:** 3,400

**Deed:** The wielder has a dream (sent by Verjigorm) that guides him to an enemy of the dragon-hunter. He must slay the enemy with Wyrmsseeker. In addition to the value for the enemy, the deed is worth 3,000 legend points, plus any more gained from resisting the Thought Worm. The character's Willpower begins to erode, and he suffers -2 steps to resist any of Verjigorm's commands.

**Effect:** The wielder gains the ability to draw upon Verjigorm's karma in a manner similar to the Karma Tap horror power. When performing an action that suits the horror's needs, the character can call upon Verjigorm telepathically. If the horror approves, the character gains Verjigorm's Karma Step (20) for the action, although the character must still spend his own Karma points.

**Rank 6 Cost:** 5,500

**Deed:** To weave this thread, the wielder must know the terrible truth of Wyrmsseeker: that it is a creation of the horrors and meant to slay dragons as part of Verjigorm's plans. The wielder must accept this truth and acknowledge Verjigorm as his master, effectively surrendering the ability to resist the horror's commands.

**Effect:** At this rank the wielder can invoke Wyrmsseeker's terrible dragonslayer power. When this power is used, the blade is infused with the power of the Hunter of Great Dragons, inflicting 4 points of permanent damage on the wielder. The sword then does STR+32 steps damage against dragons and dracoforms and inflicts an automatic 7 wounds on any dragon it strikes for the next turn. It is this power that allowed Narn Dragon-slayer to gain his reputation and, eventually, led to his death. It is believed that the dragons slain by Wyrmsseeker have their spirits drawn out by the sword and turned to some purpose by Verjigorm.





# LEGENDS

## The Windling Flowers of Love

Oh yes, my large friend, we Windlings have our sad tales. They are not the same as those that your people have, but something that shows how foolish we Windlings can sometimes be, especially in the name of love. So, listen and hear about the origin of the winged flowers of the jungle.

Long ago in the Land of Barsaive, before the time of the Scourge, there lived a windling tribe in the depths of the Liaj Jungle. They were a prosperous and happy people that dwelled peacefully in their jungle home, with little contact from outsiders. They lived on the plentiful bounty of nature and never went unsatisfied for it.

The rulers of the tribe were a wise and happy couple, revered for their wisdom and kindness. They had a son named Kaile, who was their pride and joy and that of everyone else in the tribe. Kaile was a fine child, smart and happy and fair of face and form. Kaile was especially well known for his wings, which were perfectly and delicately formed and always tinted with the shades of the most beautiful blossoms of the jungle. As he grew older he became a very handsome young man.

His parents looked forward to the day when he would find a mate and settle down, but Kaile showed no interest in the heartfelt sighs of the windlings maidens and youths who found him so attractive. He was satisfied with his own company and did not feel a need for companionship. He was never cruel to his suitors, but broke many a heart nonetheless with his polite refusals of their company.

One day, the young prince happened to be hunting in the jungle alone, as was his habit from time to time. He wandered a distance from his home following the trail of the brightly colored jungle birds that provided fresh meat for the windling village. Landing on a branch to rest for a short while, Kaile heard a terrible sound and rushed to investigate. As he peered through the thick

foliage from the treetops, he beheld an amazing sight. A stranger, the first that the young prince had ever seen, was locked in combat with a fierce sabre-cat. She was a human, clad in strange armor and wielding a flashing sword that she used to fend off the great cat. But her armor and clothing were torn and stained with blood from the great hunter's attacks and Kaile wasn't sure if she would hold out against it.

Suddenly, the two were locked in fierce combat, rolling upon the ground. Kaile quickly knocked an arrow to his hunting bow, took careful aim and let fly into the flank of the great beast. The tiny arrow was of no concern to a creature such as a sabre-cat, but the poison coating the arrow worked its way quickly into the cat's veins, slowing it with its paralyzing effects. The warriors used the last of her strength to drive her blade into the cat and slay it before herself falling to the ground.

Kaile rushed back to his village to get help for the fallen warrior and it took the work of several windling magicians to bring her back to the village. The windlings treated her injuries, which were not fatal. Kaile stood nearby and watched the whole time as the windling healers and magicians worked to aid the fallen warrior and for the first time he felt the stirrings of love in his heart, for the warrior woman was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen.

When the healers had done their work, Kaile still remained and kept watch over the fallen warrior, so that he was the first person she saw upon awakening. As the warrior recovered, she and the prince spoke often. He learned that her name was Shara and that she was a warrior an adventurer who traveled the land. As the weeks passed and Shara continued to heal from her injuries, the two became inseparable and Kaile's love for the human woman deepened. He dreaded the day when she would be well enough to leave his village and never return.



Kaile wished to take Shara as his, but he knew that he could not be a proper mate to her, so different were they, Windling and Human. A dark cloud seemed to hang over him and the people of Kaile's village grew concerned for him. Days passed and Shara healed quickly until Kaile knew that it would soon be time for her to leave. He thought that he would surely die if Shara were to leave him and so came upon a plan.

Kaile sought out Nazor the Mad, an powerful Ork wizard who dwelled deep in darkest part of the jungle. He left the village late one night and set out without a word to any for the place where the solitary wizard lived. He travelled through the darkened woods with only the light of the pale moon to guide him, carefully avoiding dangerous beasts and twisting undergrowth until he reached the deepest and darkest area of the jungle, where the moss-hung trees blocked out all view of the sky and the world beneath the jungle canopy was always night. Nazor's hut was decorated with skulls of many name-givers and painted with strange rune and symbols and pictures that seemed to writhe underneath one's gaze.

Kaile was afraid, but his love of Shara was his passion and he called upon Astendar to strengthen him. He made his way to the hut and was confronted by the wizard Nazor himself, a twisted old Ork, bent and gnarled like an ancient tree. He asked the Windling why he had come so far from his home and Kaile told the sorcerer his tale, of how he loved Shara, but could not take her for his mate. The Ork wizard told Kaile that he could use his magic to make the Windling a proper mate for the beautiful Shara, but that there would be a price: in return the wizard wanted the gifts that were unique to the Windlings, Kaile's astral-sensitive sight and his beautiful wings. Kaile agreed to Nazor's terms and the wizard cast a powder made from dried roses and lover's tears over him, while chanting a powerful spell.

The young Windling grew and grew to the size of a human, like becoming a great giant, but gone were his gossamer wings and dimmed was his windling sight of the magical world. Kaile was saddened by this

loss, but Astendar still filled his heart and soul and he did not think twice about what he had lost before he rushed to be at Shara's side.

What Kaile did not know was that Shara had many enemies that she had made in her adventuring career. When the human-sized Windling prince burst into her tent, eager to declare his love, the warrior reacted with all of her training and struck him a blow with a dagger she kept hidden with her. It is said that the young prince died of heartbreak before his wound could prove fatal. Realizing her mistake, the warrior woman wept bitter tears over Kaile's fallen form and where her tears and the prince's blood mingled there sprung up a flower with petals like Kaile's lost gossamer wings. The Windlings call these flowers kailes after the lost prince and believe that they are symbols of love.

The village was lost during the Scourge, the Liaj Jungle forever changed by the ravages of the Horrors, but it is said that in some isolated patches of the jungle kailes still grow. Legend says that they contain the essence of what the windling prince sacrificed for his love and that the flowers are special blooms blessed by Astendar as gifts of true love.

### **Adventure Ideas**

If the tale of Kaile and Shara is true, then the flowers known as kailes may indeed possess magical powers. If the flowers are blessed by Astendar, one might serve as an Enchanted Gift that inspires love as if it were created by the Questor ability of the same name (see *The Earthdawn Companion* for more on Questor abilities). The adepts, in the role of matchmakers for some destined couple, might seek out the blooms in the depths of the jungle or be send to find a hapless, lovestruck youth who has traveled into the jungle seeking them. A questor of Astendar might also seek out the legendary blossoms as an act of devotion to the Passion.

The tales of the love-inspiring blooms might also attract the attention of less scrupulous merchants, profiteers and wizards, any of whom would be interested in acquiring some of the flowers for experimentation and possible resale as a



valuable love potion or spell component.

### **The Thief Who Stole from Death**

Hmmm, a tale, you say. We nethermancers are not as prone to tale-telling as other adepts and Name-Givers, we prefer the value of silence. However, I do have a tale that I believe will interest and enlighten you. It was given to me by a spirit I spoke with some time ago. As you might expect, it is a tale about death, but more importantly it is about an adept-a thief-that followed the path of her discipline into the depths of Death's Domain.

Once, long ago, before the Scourge, there lived a thief adept named Josara, who lived in the human kingdom of Landis with her people. Josara was a hero who performed many daring deeds and who advanced far in the ways of her discipline. She was a thief to her very core, and it was said that she could steal the sun and the moon from out of the sky if she chose to.

Of all of the many treasures that she stole in her long career, the one that Josara always said she was the proudest of was when she stole the heart of her husband, the air sailor Orlan Windrunner, himself a figure of daring and adventure. The couple loved each other deeply and they traveled the land of Barsaive in search of excitement and adventure.

And what adventures they had! Plundering the ice caves of the gray ogres in the Tylon Mountains, unraveling the riddle of the tomb of the troll wizard Golthe'Nor and capturing a ransom in orichalcum in a daring raid on a Theran vessel during the Orichalcum Wars. Tales of the adventurous couple spread across the land and their names became part of legend.

The legends seemed to be at an end when Josara and Orlan undertook their most daring adventure: an exploration of the Spider Dens of the Liaj Jungle, wherein spiders the size of ponies spun their webs in the eternal darkness of the jungle overgrowth, forming a vast cave-like network of silken tunnels where many unwary travelers and would-be adventurers. Stories told of many years of lost and accumulated treasures within the dens of the jungle

spiders and Josara and Orlan sought to discover the truth of those tales and come away with a handsome collection of trophies for the effort.

But the dangers of those silken halls proved too great for even skilled adepts such as they. Orlan was bitten and fatally poisoned by a shadow spider, one of the deadliest spiders of the lair. He and Josara managed to escape from the dens, but the master air sailor died from the deadly poison not long after, for there was no cure for the shadow spider's venom. Josara used the bulk of the treasures that she and Orlan had earned throughout their career to commission for her husband a fantastic tomb that floated high above the mountains and could only be reached by air ship or through the cooperation of a bound wind spirit that protected the tomb from would-be looters.

Gathering what few possessions she had, Josara set off on a quest that led her far and wide across the land of Barsaive. She spoke with many sages and scholar and magicians and always her questions were the same. The thief adept seemed to have become obsessed about Death and she sought to learn all that she could about that mysterious force of the universe. She even sought out some of the most vile and corrupt of individuals, like the legendary Keys of Death, those who proclaim to be Death's Questors, to learn from them or wrest their secrets from their dying hands.

Rumors grew that Josara was mad with grief at the loss of her beloved, that she had become obsessed with revenge and that her studies followed some dark and unknown purpose that threatened danger to others, but that was not so. Josara did not desire revenge against unthinking creatures following the dictates of their natures, nor did she want knowledge for the sake of power. Josara was a wise woman and like the nethermancers she began to see Death like a clear pane of crystal - not a barrier - but a window into another side, another phase of existence. She saw Death as a force that hoarded lives like a miser hoards gold, and as a master thief Josara knew nothing so well as how to relieve a collector of their valuable baubles. During her studies Josara decided



that she would take the ultimate challenge: she would steal Orlan back from Death.

After gathering a vast and diverse store of knowledge, Josara made her way to the shores of the Death's Sea, where she prepared a special ritual magic. Her human versatility served her well as she made use of the many arcane secrets she had unearthed in her travels. For nine days and nights she worked and prepared in the rocky badlands along the shores of the fiery sea.

Finally she was ready and by the darkling light of the new moon, Josara drank a vial of a special poison concocted from some of the most toxic creatures and plants of Barsaive, including some of the venom of the shadow spider that killed Orlan. She lay upon a blanket embroidered with magical runes and symbols as she felt a terrible cold overtake her limbs despite the fierce heat of the Death's Sea. A lethargy crept over her, but Josara fought to keep control of her wits, for she would need them in her journey if she was to be successful.

Josara passed into the realm of Death. She felt herself pulled below the raging fires of the Death's Sea into an endless maze of underground passages, tunnels and caves. They were all lit by the flickering reddish light of the burning sea of lava above and, most amazingly, were filled with all manner of treasures and valuables, scattered all about as far as the eye could see. There was gold and silver, gems and fine weapons, even orichalcum coins and valuables enough to ransom a kingdom. Josara's thief nature quivered at the sight of such wealth, she could feel the fingers of greed brush across her soul.

But her will held fast. She had not come into the realm of Death to seek treasures, only the life of her beloved Orlan. Josara moved through the dim tunnels like a silent shadow, looking for her love, but she saw no one. There was no living thing, not a Name-giver, nor even the smallest mouse or insect in those tunnels and they stretched on and on like they might go forever. Josara began to despair in her heart that she would never find Orlan and that she might be trapped forever in those forlorn tunnels with untold

wealth as her only companion.

"Passions!" she cried out in frustration, "I would give all of this wealth, all the wealth in the world, if only to be with Orlan once again."

Just then a man appeared before Josara in the tunnel. He was a human, broad and fat and dressed in the clothing of a wealthy merchant. He wore all manner of expensive jewelry and the purse at his belt bulged with coin. He was well-groomed and everything about his appearance and manner said that this was a man of great wealth, just the kind of person who cried out to Josara to be given the gift of theft.

"Would you indeed, Josara?" The man said and reached into the folds of his rich cloak. He withdrew a ruby the size of a child's fist, the deep color of blood, which gleamed seductively in the dim light of the tunnel. Josara felt her heart leap, for she had never seen so fine a gem. "Would you surrender all of this wealth that could be yours?"

Josara's thief magic called out to her, she knew that she could take all that this merchant had and much of the wealth all around her, she could be the richest thief in all of the world and live in luxury for the rest of her life. She grappled with the way of her discipline in her heart, her eyes fixed on the beauty of the gem before her. But Josara's love for her husband was greater than her faith in her path. She turned to the strange man and said, "Yes, I would give up any wealth for my love." The merchant nodded and smiled and in an instant Josara found herself on the shores of the Death's Sea with Orlan in her arms, reunited once again.

Because she had rejected the way of her discipline, Josara was no longer a Thief. She believed that the stranger she encountered in Death's domain was Death himself, who bargained her magic for Orlan's life, which Josara considered a fair trade. In the later years of her life Josara was content with a quiet home life with her beloved and she became a Questor of Garlen, still stealing from Death at every opportunity she had.



### Adventure Ideas

The following elements of the legend of Josara and Orlan could be used by gamemasters in their Earthdawn campaigns. As always, gamemasters should feel free to tailor the details of these adventure hooks to suit their own campaigns.

#### Josara's Ritual

The magical ritual Josara used to enter the realm of death might be something that player characters could go in quest of in order to follow a fallen comrade there and attempt to rescue them. The ritual would be known only to a few wise sages or nethermancers (and perhaps a Horror or two) and there would of course be no guarantee that the characters would be able to return to the land of the living after using it.

#### Josara's Healing Balm

In her later years as a healer, Josara developed a healing ointment of special herbs and other secret ingredients. This balm had the effects of a healing potion (Earthdawn, p.258) with the additional effect of eliminating diseases and poisons in the system, but the formula for it was lost many years ago. Perhaps the player characters might discover the recipe again among some of Josara's lost papers or journal or perhaps they might set off to find the lost formula in order to use it to cure some malady.

### The Spider Dens

The mysterious Spider Dens of the Liaj Jungle still exist and their silk shrouded tunnels hold many treasures and secrets that brave adventurers might go in search of. The tunnels are inhabited by numerous dangerous arachnids, including the mysterious shadow spider. Rumors also say that a spider-like horror may well have taken up residence in the dens since the Scourge and may have transformed many of the spiders living there into dangerous constructs such as Jehuthra.

#### Orlan's Empty Tomb

Josara and Orlan lived a simple life following their return to the land of the living and Orlan's floating tomb over the mountains was all but forgotten. The tomb still holds many treasures that Orlan won during his career as a daring air pirate, including a wealth of plundered orichalcum and one or more magical treasures. The location of the floating tomb is lost and characters might discover some clue to it among ancient legends or documents telling the tale of Orlan and Josara. The tomb is guarded by a bound air spirit of great power that attempts to keep all potential tomb robbers away. It is also possible that the tomb might have been breached during the Scourge and become the lair of a Horror or even the base of skyraiders, air pirates or aerial monsters.



## THE MASKS OF LEGEND

### Universal Mythology and the World of Earthdawn

Many modern mythologists, such as Joseph Campbell and Mircea Eliade, have written theories about the universality of human mythology. There are many overarching themes in the mythologies of many human cultures, cultures often separated by hundreds of years and thousands of miles. Despite this distance, certain themes, ideas, and images seem almost universal in myth and legend, known in one form or another throughout the world. Anthropologist Adolf Bastian called these things *elementargedanken*, "elementary ideas," common in one form or another to all peoples. Experts speculate about psychological archetypes, the universal unconscious, the universality of certain human experiences, and even genetics as an explanation for these commonalities.



In the world of FASA's Earthdawn game, we have an additional explanation for these things. Perhaps the great myths and legends of human culture are based on something real, that occurred long, long ago in an age now lost in the mists of time and nothing more than a dim, subconscious racial memory for modern people (such as the 21st century folk of Shadowrun). Earthdawn speculates, what if there actually was a time when giants walked the Earth and those bygone times we know of in legends were once true?

This idea gives Earthdawn gamemasters a unique opportunity for adventure- and campaign-building: the ability to draw upon common myths and use them in new and different ways in the Earthdawn world, to create (or re-create) the Fourth World legends that will form the underlying basis for modern (Fifth and Sixth World) mythology. In this article, I would like to outline some possible interpretations of certain mythological motifs and how they could be used in an Earthdawn campaign. These suggestions are but one possible set of interpretations of what is a rich and virtually bottomless well of mythological themes and images and readers are invited to do their own researches and come to their own conclusions.

## **The Creation of Nature and Life**

The most important myth of all is the First Myth, the origin of all that is. Creation myths are in many ways some of the most universal, and all cultures have wondered at the origin of life and the cosmos. Many of these stories fit well within the cosmology of Earthdawn. One of the more common creation themes is the world being spoken or sung into existence. "In the beginning was the Word" says the Gospel of John and the world of Ursula LeGuin's Earthsea novels is described as being spoken into existence by the True Language.

The other major theme in creation myths is the formation of the world from the body of a divine being: such as the Earth being the body of Gaea the mother goddess in Greek myth, or formed from the flesh and bones of the slain giant Ymir in Norse mythology.

In Earthdawn, how the world came about has little bearing on the actions of a group of adventuring adepts, but it can form the basis for a cosmology that has other legends that do. With the importance of True Names in Earthdawn cosmology, it is likely the name-givers of Barsaive conceive of the Universe as spoken or sung into existence; perhaps a kind of cosmic self-awareness which named itself and created order out of the primal chaos of creation.

**Adventure:** A wizard is performing experiments to learn the origin of the Universe. Terrible forebodings gather when it appears that the wizard is mad enough to ally himself with a Horror that claims it can provide him with the knowledge he seeks.

## **Worlds Above, Below and Within**

Ancient cultures recognize the existence of many worlds. In addition to the physical world, there is a spirit world or higher plane and often a lower world or underworld. These worlds are accessible to certain people (like adepts in Earthdawn) who can travel there, perform heroic deeds and return to share what they have accomplished. Earthdawn has the spirit world of astral space, as well as the distant netherworlds that exist in the far reaches of the astral. There are spirit realms, elemental planes and the strange and terrible depths from which the horrors come.

In many such tales, the worlds are united by some sort of cosmic axis; a universal center-point like the world-tree Yggdrassil, the home of the gods, the great ladder. Such a place is often considered a gateway from one world to another, and might be the sort of thing that a group of adepts might travel to in order to make their way into the netherworlds.



**Adventure:** A group of adepts must travel on a quest into the netherworlds to reach the Citadel of the Worlds, which sits at the hub of the elemental planes. There they must find the purest of orichalcum to forge a magical blade.

### **Bringers of Magic and the Arts**

Many myth talk of a time before the development of civilization. In each tale there is a figure who brings knowledge and power to humanity. Prometheus in Greek mythology stole divine fire from Earth to give it as a gift to humanity and was punished for it. Thoth is believed to have given the Egyptians letters and learning. Raven the Trickster stole the sun and placed it in the sky where it could shed light over the whole world. Each of these figures is a friend and ally of humanity who faced difficult odds for their benefit. Perhaps in the world of Earthdawn, the tales of these champions might well be based on the actions of heroic adepts who have liberated life, light, learning and hope from the darkness of the horrors and the long night of the Scourge.

### **Lost Worlds and Legendary Lands**

What are the possible Fourth World sources of our legends of many "lost" lands such as Atlantis, Lemuria, Mu, Avalon, Lyonesse or Shangri-La? Could Coranado's El Dorado, the "Lost City of Gold," have truly existed in the Americas? What of the Fountain of Youth? Perhaps Earthdawn adventurers can visit the places that inspired these many myths. For example, gamemasters can use materials about legendary Atlantis, a powerful island nation with mighty magic to design adventures in Thera, a powerful island nation with mighty magic.

### **Giants of the Earth**

Many legendary heroes and figures might be based on true people from Earthdawn's Age. A gamemaster can take that legend as a basis and build a figure who is slightly familiar, but not quite what the players might expect. For example the Russian legend of the witch Baba Yaga who lived in the dark

woods in a dancing hut surrounded by a fence of skulls lit from within by her magic. She rode through the air in a mortar and pestle and captured children for her supper. Surely the basis for an Earthdawn NPC! Or Hercules the archetypal strongman, Vainomien the master wizard of Finnish myth or Isun-bushi, the Japanese hero who was only one inch tall (a Windling warrior perhaps?)

### **Giants of the Earth**

Earthdawn gamemasters in need of monsters need only turn to the mythology books and consider how some of the creatures therein might have existed and how their tales might have changed as they were passed down over millennia. Change the players expectations of the myths they have come to know by throwing a little twist into things. The Creatures of Earthdawn sourcebook gives some examples of this with creatures such as chimera and unicorns.

### **Lovers and Bearers of Divine Seed**

As I mentioned in my "Earthdawn Love" article, Love is a powerful mythological theme and motivating force. Legendary tales of love are many in various cultures. Important themes include love between mortals and immortals (perhaps a tales of a tryst between a name-giver and one of the Passions?), and love that is foredoomed from the start, such as an affair between members of two different name-giver races.

### **War in Heaven and Earth**

Tales of divine battle and conflict are common. From the Twilight Battle of Ragnarok to the Trojan War, legends have been built around great battles and conflicts. What wars in Earthdawn could these stories be based around?

### **Death and Rebirth**

A final great theme is the journey into the underworld and the return of the Hero: Orpheus, Balder, Eskrigal and many others. Earthdawn heroes can travel into Death's Domain and perhaps even bargain with that Power. The risks will be great and the heroes will be faced with a journey into their own



souls. Only the greatest can make such a trip and return, but then that's the sort of legends Earthdawn characters are supposed to be building, right?

**Adventure:** A journey into the afterlife to bring a companion or important NPC back to the world of the living. What bargain will the adepts need to make with Death to succeed?

Anyone interested in building on these themes should consider reading some of the following books: anything by Joseph Campbell, especially *The Hero's Journey* and

*Masks of God*, *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places* is an excellent resource for legendary lands and its companion *The Dictionary of Imaginary Creatures*, is likewise a great source of monsters. Any good book on mythology from any culture can provide much inspiration. I also recommend *GURPS Religion* for some excellent material on the themes and images found in myth and legend and how these can be used in adventures.



## EARTHDAWN LOVE

### Some thoughts about love and sex in Earthdawn

I'll admit it's not very "high fantasy" and kind of high school, but I wonder about this stuff. I also have a personal interest in how certain things might exist or be perceived in the lands of Barsaive and elsewhere in the world of Earthdawn. This article looks at some questions of sex and sexuality in Earthdawn. Keep it out of the hands of the young'uns.

#### Interracial Sex

When folks like film director Spike Lee address the topic of "interracial relationships" all they have to worry about is people of different colors. In Earthdawn we're talking about people of different species (or at least different sub-species of homo sapiens). What are the problems and dynamics of a romantic relationship between members of two different Name-Giver races?

It would seem at Earthdawn's point on the mana curve that the various races cannot interbreed with each other. While metahumans in Shadowrun can, the differences between the races seem to become more pronounced with the higher magic level, until they are truly separate races for reproductive purposes.

Now it seems physically possible for most of the "metahuman" races (i.e. Elves, Dwarves, Humans, Orks and Trolls) to have sexual relations, but it is doubtful it is considered socially acceptable by any of the

cultures in Barsaive (most of which are very xenophobic and race-centered). Sexual relations with the radically different name-givers like the T'Skrang or Windings is pretty much right out.

All of this, however, doesn't change the fact that the name-givers are all sentient, emotional beings, regardless of their physical equipment. It would not be entirely unbelievable for two members of incompatible races to fall in love with each other. What would become of such a doomed romance? Would the couple be capable of overcoming the vast obstacles to their relationship or would it eventually have to end in tragedy? Would Astendar and her questors take interest in such a tragic love affair? (almost certainly, I would say). Could some magical means be found for the two to share their passion in some way? Could children be produced?

The possibilities take on the proportions of a true Legendary tale. For example consider the legend of the Windling Flowers



of Love.

## Horrible Sex

Okay, let's be honest, the Horrors are going to use love and sex as weapons against Name-Givers. They are two of our most powerful drives and the Horrors know enough about such strong emotions to manipulate them.

There are the obvious manifestations, like legends of succubi and other "sexual demons," horrors that feed off of kinky and perverted sex with or by the name-givers, but there could also be horrors that require love to feed on (especially interesting if the horror requires genuine love, like a black widow that must draw in a mate and then kill it in the process of mating). What of the unpleasant possibility of horror/name-giver crossbreeds (if such as thing is possible at all) or of infants whose development is affected by a horror?

## Fairy Folk

No, I'm not talking about the Elves here. What is the status of homosexual and bisexual relations in Barsaive and the rest of the Earthdawn world? What is the place of "gay" people in Barsaivian culture?

FASA products have declined to say, so we must speculate. The only thing close to an official mention is in the description of the Seduction skill, which is described as useful for the characters "preferred sex" (rather than a term such as "opposite sex"). While it is possible that gay people are totally accepted and not discriminated against, I find that fairly unlikely (and to be honest, lacking in dramatic story potential).

In a culture struggling to recover from an event like the Scourge, it is likely Barsaivian society tends to stress the values of the family and perpetuating the species. On the other hand, confined in enclosed kaers for generations, many cultures likely resorted to some amount of homosexual relations to relieve sexual tension while keeping the population under control (the Talisman anthology reveals that birth control was used as well). In the aftermath of leaving the kaers, there might be a counter reaction

against same-sex relations (or greater acceptance, or both, depending on the culture).

Given their highly literate, fairly hedonistic culture, the Therans are probably more accepting and open about homosexuality than the Barsaivians, seen as another strike against the practice by the people of Barsaive, who might see homosexuality as a "Theran perversion."

What "gay culture" there is in the world most likely began with the Elves (stereotypical, I know, but there's a reason for most of those stereotypes). Elves are long-lived enough to try everything at least once, and their concept of love and mating seems to suggest same-sex relationships would not be unusual. In one Earthdawn campaign I played in, the common term for gay people was lossel, a derivative of a Sperethiel term that loosely translates as "one who's lover is like one's self."

## The Oldest Profession

Prostitution may not be the stuff of legend, but it is fairly likely it exists in the world of Earthdawn. Aside from the normal urban evolution that tends to lead to prostitution there again is the unique pressure of people living in confined kaers for generations while they waited out the Scourge. Sex is likely to end up as a major recreational activity, and some kind of system of "prostitution" or "free love" could evolve. A good example of this is the practices of the followers of Astendar in one of the short stories in the Talisman anthology, akin to the "temple prostitutes" of many ancient religions.

There is also no doubt that sexual wiles are used by the heroes and villains of legend to achieve their goals. Some of the talents and abilities of the Troubadour discipline and the questors of Astendar make that matter fairly clear.

## Family Values

The role of the family in Barsaivian culture is an interesting question. Generally nuclear families (parents and children, along with possibly grandparents) seem the norm, but



the Trolls of the Twilight Peaks have line marriage and a more clannish society. The T'Skrang have a matriarchal culture with the communal raising of young and the Obsidimen... well, their social structure is quite unlike anything the other Name-Givers would really recognize as a "family" at all, but more of an association like a Brotherhood or even a secret society.

### True Love

The power of love has been acknowledged in legends for as long as humans have told them. In times of need, love is a force that can move mountains, defeat any evil, even conquer Death itself.

The power of Love (capital "L") should not be overlooked in Earthdawn, where thought

and passion often equal deed in the real world. The magic of Earthdawn responds to the thoughts and feelings of Name-Givers and True Love is a powerful focus for such magical energies.

I don't suggest any game mechanics for this, but it is a rich theme for an Earthdawn gamemaster to use as a basis for adventures or even entire campaigns. What of an adventure based around the forbidden young couple (ala Romeo and Juliet) who call upon Astendar to allow them to flee their oppressive families to a place of safety where they can be together. Who knows? Perhaps the Passion's aid will take the form of a group of player characters....



## NEW DISCIPLINES

### Spirit Warrior

Spirit Warriors are martial adepts who are strongly in tune with the spirit worlds and astral space. They use their abilities to defend their communities from both physical and astral threats, while maintaining good relations with friendly spirits as helpers and allies. Spirit Warriors are generally found only among the more primitive peoples of Barsaive, much like Shamans (see the Earthdawn Magic Sourcebook).

Many spirit warrior abilities were tested during the Scourge, when their talents became important in protecting the kaers they lived in from invasion by the Horrors.

Important Attributes: Dexterity, Strength, and Willpower

Racial Restrictions: None

Karma Ritual: To perform a Karma ritual, the spirit warrior draws a triangle within a circle on a ground and meditates there, singing songs to the spirits to gain their favor. The ritual ends when a spirit gives some sign of favor to the warrior, which may be anything from a whisper on the wind to a gout of flame from the earth to a mighty clap of thunder.

Artisan Skills: Body Painting, Tattooing, Storytelling/Oral History

#### First Circle

Acrobatic Strike

Air Dance

Astral Sight

Avoid Blow

Fireblood

Karma Ritual

Melee Weapons

#### Second Circle Talents

Durability (7/6)

Steel Thought

Third Circle Talents

Silent Walk

Unarmed Combat

#### Fourth Circle

Plant Talk: At the cost of 1 point of Strain, the Spirit Warrior can speak with plant spirits in the same manner as the first circle Elementalist spell of the same name.

Elemental Tongues

Thread Weaving (Spirit Weaving)

#### Fifth Circle

Physical Defense: Increase the Spirit Warrior's Physical Defense by 1.



## Elemental Hold

### Gliding Stride

#### Sixth Circle

**Call Ancestor:** By performing a special Karma Ritual and sacrificing a Recovery Test, the Spirit Warrior can call upon the spirit of one of his ancestors or ancestral heroes. If the Karma Ritual Test overcomes the spirit's Spell Defense, the spirit will appear and answer one question to the best of its ability or it will grant the adept a single use of one of the talents that it had in life at a rank equal to the Spirit Warrior's Karma Ritual. This ability must be used within a day and a night of the ritual or it is lost.

Spirit Hold  
Spirit Talk

#### Seventh Circle

**Spell Defense:** Increase the Spirit Warrior's Spell Defense by 1.  
Enduring Art  
Life Check

#### Eighth Circle

**Karma:** The Spirit Warrior may spend karma on any action using Willpower only.  
Safe Path  
Spirit Strike

#### Ninth Circle

**Initiative:** Increase the Spirit Warrior's Initiative dice by 1 Step.  
**Social Defense:** Increase the Spirit Warrior's Social Defense by 1.  
Lion Heart  
Metal Ward  
Water Dance

#### Tenth Circle

**Karma:** The Spirit Warrior may spend karma on any action using Dexterity only.  
**Physical Defense:** Increase the Spirit Warrior's Physical Defense by 1.  
Animate Object  
Orbiting Spy

#### Eleventh Circle

**Karma:** Increase the Spirit Warrior's maximum Karma by 25.

## Cobra Strike

### Plant Shelter

#### Twelfth Circle

**Recovery:** The Spirit Warrior gains an additional Recovery Test.  
**Spell Defense:** Increase the Spirit Warrior's Spell Defense by 1.  
Summon  
Summoning Circle

#### Thirteenth Circle

**Karma:** The Spirit Warrior may spend Karma on Damage Tests against spirits of all kinds.  
**Spirit Walk:** At the cost of 3 Strain, the Spirit Warrior can physically enter the Astral Plane. It costs an additional 3 Strain to leave the astral. This ability is similar to the Rank 15 Lightbearer talent except that the Spirit Warrior cannot bring anyone with them.  
Bargain with Summoned Creature  
Spirit Mount

#### Fourteenth Circle

**Physical Defense:** Increase the Physical Defense of the Spirit Warrior by 1.  
**Recovery Test:** The Spirit Warrior gains an additional Recovery Test.  
Matrix Strike  
Aura Armor

#### Fifteenth Circle

**Walker Between the Worlds:** At the cost of 3 points of permanent damage, the Spirit Warrior becomes highly acclimated to the astral and spirit planes and is able to function there more effectively than others. This ability adds 1 step to the adept's Astral Sight, Spirit Strike and Matrix Strike talents.  
Ethereal Weapon  
Moving Earth

## Half-Magic

Spirit Warriors can use half-magic to identify plants and other natural materials, different types of spirits and for gathering natural ingredients for alchemy and enchanting.



## Sensing Spirits

Spirit warriors are sensitive to the nature of astral space. They may make half-magic tests to determine the presence of spirits in nearby astral space. They also have some minor half-magic summoning abilities that allow them to call and bargain with lesser spirits (primarily elemental spirits).

## War Dancer

Before the long night of the Scourge, the Human Kingdom of Landis in Barsaive was ruled, like the rest of the province, by the Theran Empire. The proud warriors of Landis were forced by their Theran masters to surrender their weapons and all implements of war were outlawed on pain of enslavement and death.

Though many warriors wanted to fight the oppression of mighty Thera, they could not risk their compatriots and loved ones. They hid from the forces of the Empire and continued their teachings in secret, waiting for their day when they might be free.

One of these warriors was a man known as Kaatal. In seeking a new weapon to turn against the Therans, Kaatal looked to the world of nature, where he studied the combat abilities of many animals and creatures. Kaatal did not have the passion to follow the way of the Beastmaster, for he did not seek to understand the mind of the beast—he looked to nature only as a means of finding a new way in which to be a Warrior. Kaatal trained to make his own body the weapon that he needed, following the ways and techniques that he observed.

In time, Kaatal taught his way to others. His teaching were concealed in the graceful movements of his combat style, which were further exaggerated to make them into a whirling sort of dance that the Therans could take to be nothing more than a folk custom and not a deadly weapon. So was the discipline of the War Dancer born.

The War Dancers of Landis never liberated their homeland from Thera. Even as their number grew, news of the coming Scourge reached Barsaive. The construction of kaers began, and the war dancers entered the underground shelters to wait out the

Long Night. While hidden in their separate kaers, they continued to teach their ways of their discipline and kept alive a spark of rebellion against Thera and theran ways.

When the people of Barsaive began to emerge again into the light of day, the war dancers began to recognize one another from the many kaers in which they had been concealed. Although they followed the same discipline, centuries of isolation had led to factionalism among them; there were debates on proper traditions, ways of teaching and order of precedence among the proud warriors. The war dancers were splintered into small groups and some individuals struck out on their own, traveling the lands of Barsaive and teaching their discipline to others they encountered.

Important Attributes: Dexterity, Strength, and Toughness

Racial Restrictions: Obsidiman, T'Skrang, Windling

Karma Ritual: To perform his karma ritual the War Dancer meditates. When an inner state of tranquility is reached he begins the Great Dance, moving through each of the elements as represented in the Dance: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Wood. The ritual ends with a decisive punch into a cupped hand.

Artisan Skills: Dance, Elemental Sculpting

First Circle

Talents

Acrobatic Strike

Avoid Blow

Karma Strike

Karma Ritual

Maneuver

Unarmed Combat

Second Circle

Talents

Durability (7/6)

Fireblood

Steel Thought

Third Circle

Talents

Great Throw

Tiger Spring



**Fourth Circle**

Karma: The War Dancer may spend Karma on any action using DEX only.

Talents

Swift Kick

Thread Weaving (dance-weaving)

**Fifth Circle**

Physical Defense: Increase the Physical Defence of the War Dancer by one.

Talents

Anticipate Blow

Temper Self

**Sixth Circle**

Initiative: Increase the War Dancer's Initiative step by 1.

Talents

Disarm

Lizard Leap

**Seventh Circle**

Recovery Test: The War Dancer gains an additional recovery test per day.

Talents

Detect Weapon

Second Attack

**Eighth Circle**

Physical Defense: Increase the Physical Defense of the War Dancer by one.

Talents

Cobra Strike

Spot Armor Flaw

**Ninth Circle**

Iron Hand: By expending two permanent points of damage, the War Dancer hardens his hands like iron, increasing base unarmed damage by three steps.

Talents

Battle Shout

Crushing Blow

Wound Balance

**Tenth Circle**

Karma: The War Dancer may spend Karma on Damage Tests in unarmed combat only.

Social Defense: Increase the Social

Defense of the War Dancer by one.

Talents

Champion Challenge

Lion Heart

**Eleventh Circle**

Initiative: Increase the Initiative step of the War Dancer by one.

Talents

Defense

Weapon Breaker

**Twelfth Circle**

Physical Defense: Increase the Physical Defense of the War Dancer by one.

Spell Defense: Increase the Spell Defense of the War Dancer by one.

Talents

Critical Hit

Whirlwind

**Thirteenth Circle**

Recovery Test: The War Dancer gains an additional Recovery Test.

Talents

Spirit Strike

Safe Thought

**Fourteenth Circle**

Karma: Increase the War Dancer's Maximum Karma by 25.

Talents

Multi-Strike

Vital Strike

**Fifteenth Circle**

Elemental Favor: At the cost of three Strain, the War Dancer can perform a special Dance that calls upon the favor of the elemental planes. The War Dancer must perform a special hour-long ritual and make a Karma Ritual Test. That value becomes the effect value for one elemental effect that the War Dancer may call upon in battle. The favor can be a gust of wind, a sudden burst of flames, a minor ground tremor, etc. The favor must be called upon before the next sunrise or it is lost.

Talents

Gain Surprise

Stone Skin



## New Talents

Karma Strike

Step Number: Strength + Rank

Action: No

Skill Use: No

Requires Karma: Yes

Strain: None

Discipline Talent Use: War Dancer

This talent allows the user to focus magical energy into any part of the body to increase the damage of an unarmed attack. The character uses their Unarmed Combat talent to hit and uses their Karma Blow talent for damage. The character must spend Karma to use this talent. The karma die is added to the damage roll. The effect of the Karma Blow talent lasts until a hit is scored or a number of rounds equal to the talent rank pass.

Great Throw

Step Number: Strength + Rank

Action: Yes

Skill Use: Yes

Requires Karma: No

Strain: None

Discipline Talent Use: War Dancer

This talent allows the possessor to hurl an opponent to the ground. The attacker makes Unarmed Combat test versus the Physical Defense of the opponent. If the character gains at least a Good success he does damage equal to their Rank in Great Throw plus Strength. The opponent also must make a Knockdown Test with +5 added to the difficulty.

